



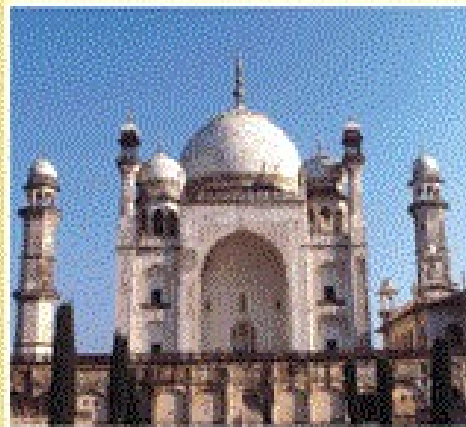
सत्यमेव जयते

# MAHARASHTRA STATE GAZETTEERS

## HISTORY

### Part III - MARATHA PERIOD

(Contributors : Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Dr. V. G. Dighe, Prof. B. K. Apte, Dr. B.G. Kunte)



GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA  
MUMBAI

## PREFACE

I am very glad to bring out the e-Book edition of the earlier published State Gazetteers: History: Ancient Period, Medieval Period, and Maratha Period.

History: Ancient Period was originally published in 1967 where as History Medieval Period and History: Maratha Period were published in 1968 and 1972 respectively.

Covering three different phases of History, these three books form an important source to study the antiquity of Maharashtra.

History: Ancient Period roughly covers the period from pre-historic times to fall of Yadavas in early 14<sup>th</sup> century A.D. History: Medieval Period gives account of Alauddin Khilji's invasion in late 13<sup>th</sup> century to Moghals as masters of Maharashtra. History: Maratha Period narrates the story of rise of Shivaji as Lord of Maharashtra and Maratha Supremacy.

Being a valuable reference works, the need was felt to preserve these volumes. In this age of modernization, Information and Technology have become key words. To keep pace with the changing needy the hour. I have decided the bring out C.D. version of these three volumes. Accordingly these three volumes are combined and complied in one C.D. I am sure, scholars, studios persons and general readers across the world will find this C.D. immensely beneficial.

I am thankful to the Honourable Minister, Shri. Ashokrao Chavan (Industries and Mines, Cultural Affairs and Protocol), and the Minister of State, Shri. Rana Jagjitsinh Patil (Agriculture, Industries and Cultural Affairs), Shri Bhushan Gagrani. (Secretary, Cultural Affairs) Government of Maharashtra for being a constant source of inspiration.

Place: Mumbai

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Maharashtra State Gazetteers

GENERAL VOLUME—HISTORY

PART III

MARATHA PERIOD

CHAPTER

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Maharashtra State Gazetteers

## INTRODUCTION

This is the third part of the General Volume on History to be published in four parts. My thanks are due to the late Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Dr. V. G. Dighe, Prof. B. K. Apte and Dr. B. G. Kunte, for their scholarly contributions.

I am thankful to the Joint Editor, Dr. B. G. Kunte, and other members of the staff for the assistance rendered by them in the preparation of press copy correction of proofs and preparation of Index. My thanks are also due to Shri J. W. D'Souza, Director, Government Printing, Stationery and Publications, and Shri S. A. Sapre, Manager, Government Central Press, Bombay-4.

P. SETU MADHAVA RAO,  
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Maharashtra State Gazetteers

**HISTORY**  
**PART III—MARATHA PERIOD**  
**CHAPTER 1\***  
**RISE OF THE MARATHA POWER**  
**(1630-1707)**

**POLITICAL BACKGROUND.**

A RACE OF MEN CAN BE CALLED A NATION only when they have a State or compact territory of their own, united under a universally accepted government not subject to any other power, besides a certain community of life and thought among the general population. The Marathas had formed such a Nation and State in the far-off past. But with the fall of the Yadavas of Devagiri, early in the 14th century, a foreign sovereignty, alien to them in race and religion was imposed on the land; and henceforth the population lived as scattered units under a number of barons of their own race—some large like the Yadavas of Sindkhed or the Mores of Javli, but most others petty owners of a few villages. All of them owed allegiance to the Sultan of Gulbarga or Ahmadnagar, paid him tribute, and served in his wars with their personal contingents in hope of reward. The mass of the Maratha people continued to live in seclusion in their villages, following their immemorial way of life, administering all local affairs through the hereditary village officials, and deciding their disputes by means of the village jury (*Mahazan*) who reported their findings to the district or provincial governor for confirmation and execution. The change of dynasties at the capital was to them no more than a two days' talk.

But this static condition of society was rudely disturbed when the authority of the central government dissolved, the Sultan became a puppet, factions nobles fought each other for selfish gain, and in the country-side every ambitious man raised his hand in lawless violence against his neighbours. Village life became unsettled and decay seized the seats of the country's wealth—production and the centres of culture and social progress. Fiscal oppression due to *doamli* (rival authorities administering the same place) impoverished the rulers and the ruled alike, quite apart from the foreign invasion which the anarchy invited.

The law suits about the right to the hereditary village offices, the partition of family-lands or service-emoluments among kinsmen, the

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\*This Chapter is contributed by the late Sir Jadunath Sarkar.

encroachment of one village-headman (*desmukh*) on his neighbouring villages —all these ever-rising cases could not any longer be decided by a common judge nor such a judge's decision enforced by a strong executive magistrate. From this anarchy and decay of social order the house of Bhosle delivered Maharashtra in the dim twilight following the death of Malik Amber (1626) and the dissolution of the Nizam Sahi monarchy.

#### KEYNOTE OF MARATHA HISTORY, 17TH CENTURY.

The creator of the modern Maratha nation was Sivaji Bhosle, whose life, 1627-1680, bridges the gulf in Deccan history, between the extinction of the Ahmadnagar Sultanate and Aurangzeb's coming for the last time to the Deccan to wear out his life and empire there. Within two years of his death (1707) the Government of Delhi gave up all attempts to rule Maharashtra.

Before the rise of Sivaji the Maratha race was scattered like atoms through many Deccani kingdoms ; he welded them into a mighty nation. Since the fall of the Yadavas of Devagiri, they had been mere hirelings, mere servants of aliens; they served the State, but had no lot or part in its management. Sivaji founded a State in Maharashtra and taught his people that they were capable of administering a kingdom in all its departments. And this he achieved in the teeth of the opposition of four great powers like the Moghal Empire, the Bijapur Sultanate, the Portuguese and the Abyssinians of Janjira.

Sivaji was the son of Sahaji Bhosle and climbed to greatness on his father's shoulders. True, the Maharaja Sahaji best known in history was a ruler of the Kanarese country only and lived to the end of his days as a vassal of Adil Sah, no longer administering any part of Maharashtra (after 1648). But his wonderful resourcefulness, unfailing opportunism, and pioneer spirit of adventure made Sivaji's success easy, some may even say, possible. The noon-day splendour of the son's career has thrown into the shade the morning brilliancy of the father's achievement. Sahaji was the founder of Greater Maharashtra.

Sahaji (c. 1595-1664), the son of Maloji, received his early training in war under his paternal uncle Vithoji, in the service of the Ahmadnagar Sultan, and after Vithoji's death (1623), succeeded him in the command of the family contingent. The discerning eye of Malik Amber first appreciated Sahaji's genius, and there are reports that this young captain launched the tactical move which led to the Nizamsahi victory at Bhatvadi (Oct. 1624). After Malik Amber's death (14<sup>1</sup>, May 1626), he served that Regent's son and successor Fath Khan for a few years. But a hopeless decay and disorder now seized the Nizam Sahi Government. Sahaji's father-in-law Jadhav Rav, the highest Hindu vassal of Ahmadnagar, was murdered at Court on 12 August 1630. The Sultan and his vazir plotted against

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<sup>1</sup>10th May as given by Shri Sardesai.



each other, and Sahaji, unwilling to face a dark future, went over to the Moghal side in November of the same year, and was assigned *jagirs* in Junnar, Sangamner and Bezapur (Bijapur) from the Moghal Government. But he had first to conquer these places which had been seized by the Bijapuris from the dead Nizam Sahi Government. His career of conquest and plunder in the Poona district was checked by a Bijapuri army, and he was for a time driven to seek refuge with the governor of Junnar. On the retirement of the Bijapuri invasion, Sahaji built a new fort Sahgad (on the site of the ruined Bhimgad, misspelt *Pemgad*), raised troops, and again set out on conquest. Abandoning the Moghal service (June 1632), he began to seize the districts of Nasik, Trimbak, Sangamner and Junnar, and parts of North Konkan. In concert with the Bijapuri generals he offered opposition to the Moghals when they besieged Daulatabad fort, the last stronghold of the Nizam Sahis. But that fort fell on 17 June 1633, and the last crowned Nizam Sah, Husain was taken away to die in Gwalior prison.

The Moghals captured the Sultan but not his kingdom. At once Adil Sah and Sahaji Bhosle seized as much of the ownerless Nizam Sahi kingdom as they could. With the consent of a widowed Nizam Sahi Queen, Sahaji crowned a boy prince as Murtaza Nizam Sah II in his own stronghold of Sahgad (Sept, 1633). In the name of this puppet Sahaji carried on the Government for three years, seized districts and forts, and levied a large army. Thus, he quickly occupied all the old Ahmadnagar territory from Poona and Cakan to Balaghat, and the environs of Junnar, Ahmadnagar, Sangamner, Trimbak and Nasik, plundering on all sides. His ally was Murari Pandit, the local Bijapuri commander and the favourite of the Adil Sahi Vazir Khavas Khan. He gained the trust and even the personal love of Murari by his cleverness and ability, as we see in the tradition of Sahaji having weighed an elephant by the Archimedian principle, for Murari's *Tula Dan* at Pabal (23 September 1633).

He made himself the master of the forts of Junnar, Jivdhan, Bhor, Mahuli, Kohij, etc., and practically all Tal-Konkan from Mahad to the frontier of the Javhar State. He next removed his royal puppet from Sahgad to Junnar and himself lived in the latter fort in great wealth and power; twelve thousand of the disbanded former troops of Ahmadnagar gathered round him.

#### POLITICAL SITUATION IN 1634.

We possess an accurate account of the political geography of Maharashtra in this year in the recently published Diary of the Viceroy of Portuguese India, which embodies the reports<sup>1</sup> that he received from his Brahman intelligencer posted in Bijapur during that year. The division was this: of the total Nizam Sahi territory worth 84 lakhs of *hon*, roughly one-fourth each was held by the Moghals, Adil Sah and Sahaji, and the remaining quarter was being scrambled for. Adil Sah had annexed 20¼ lakhs of *hon* worth (besides Solapur

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<sup>1</sup>Reprinted by P. S. Pissurlencar in *Antigualhas*, Vol. I, fasc. 1 (1941).

and Ausa, worth seven and one lakhs respectively held by two of his independent Muslim nobles) ; the Moghals had seized 21 lakhs of *hon* worth, and Sahaji 20¾ lakhs worth, including Junnar (three lakhs *hon*), Sahgad (one lakh) Nasik (one lakh), Cakan (one lakh), Camargonda (¾ of a lakh), nearly three-fourths of Tal-Konkan. (eleven lakhs) and minor places (three lakhs in all), but not Poona (75,000 *hon*) nor Indapur (50,000 *hon*), nor Nilanga (one lakh) which then lay in the Adil Sahi portion (as also did Caul in Konkan). His roving operations helped to baffle the Moghals in their siege of the fort of Parenda (24 Feb.–21 May 1634), under Prince Suja, who was starved out.

During 1635, the new Moghal viceroy of Ahmadnagar, Khan-i Dauran kept Sahaji in check. Next year the scales were hopelessly turned against Sahaji. Sah Jahan arrived at Daulatabad (21 Feb. 1636) determined to settle this Deccan business once for all.

A vast force of 50,000 Moghal horsemen under the best generals was launched to overawe Golkonda, invade Bijapur, and crush Sahaji Bhosle. The Maratha chief was driven away to Lohgad and his village of Camargonda captured. Saista Khan at the head of 8,000 troops wrested the *parganas* of Sangamner taluka from Sahajis men and pursued Sahaji himself to Konkan. The city of Junnar was captured, but not the fort where Sahaji's family had sought shelter (middle of March 1636).

After some skirmishes and military demonstrations, the Bijapur Government was forced to make peace with the Emperor (May 1636) on the following terms :—

(1) The Nizam Sahi State was to be abolished even in name. All its territory was to be divided between the Moghals and Adil Sah,— the latter getting Solapur, Vangi, Bhalki, Chidgupa, the Poona district, and North Konkan. (2) Adil Sah recognised the over-lordship of the Emperor of Delhi. (3) Sahaji was to be expelled from Maharashtra and not to be taken into Bijapuri service unless he ceded to the Moghals the forts of Junnar, Trimbak and some others.

The full force of the imperialists was now turned on Sahaji, who fought long in the broken North Konkan; but after a long chase by Khan-i-Zaman, a general of Sah Jahan and Randulla Khan his Bijapuri ally, the Maratha chief was forced to capitulate at Mahuli about end of October, giving up to the Moghals his puppet Nizam Sah and his royal property, seven forts (Junnar, Trimbak, Tringalwadi, Harsgad, Jivdhan, Cavand and Hadsar), with all his territories in Maharashtra except his small *jagirs* in the Poona district—which he was to hold merely as a revenue-paying vassal of Adil Sah. His new over-lord made to him a formal grant of the Poona *jagir*, on 25 Feb. 1637.

Thus Sahaji Bhosle made his exit from Maharashtra. He later built up a vast estate, a kingdom except for the lack of independence, but that was in the Kanarese country, and he had no further connection



with Maharashtra except as a petty *jagirdar* without political power, his *locum tenens* being subject to the authority of the Bijapuri district governor. The creation of a national state in Maharashtra was the work of Shivaji and became an accomplished fact in 1674, ten years after the death of Sahaji.

### SHIVAJI.

Shivaji was the second son of Sahaji and Jija Bai (a daughter of the Jadhav lord of Sindkhed). He was born<sup>1</sup> (10 April 1627) in the fort of Sivneri which overlooks the town of Junnar, and there the mother and the son lived till 1637, when they were removed to Poona by Sahaji's order. After entering Bijapuri service at the end of 1636, Sahaji was sent away to the Mysore plateau to conquer fresh territories for his sovereign and *jagirs* for himself; he was granted Bangalore in 1639 and made it his seat. His favourite wife Tuka Bai Mohite and her son Vyankoji accompanied him, while Shivaji and his mother were left behind. But he appointed Dadaji Kond Dev as manager of his Poona *jagir* and ordered him to remove Shivaji and Jija Bai and maintain them there. In 1640-41 Dadaji paid a visit to Sahaji at Bangalore, with his master's family. Here Shivaji was married to Sai Bai Nimbalkar, and a portion of the Poona *jagir*, yielding about a lakh and a half of rupees in revenue, was formally bestowed on Shivaji as Sahaji's deputy while the father lived, and as full owner after his death. An administration in four departments under four heads<sup>2</sup> sent by Sahaji from Bangalore was set up in Poona. Dadaji, as the guardian of the minor, presided over the law-court, along with Shivaji and Jija Bai, and latterly Shivaji only. On the death of Dadaji (7th March 1647), Shivaji became his own master at the age of twenty.

Dadaji Kond Dev was an exceptionally capable and active administrator. His own charge included the part of the Poona district from Cakan to Indapur, Sirval, and the frontier of Wai, but not Supa (which was managed by another agent of Sahaji). The country had been desolated by anarchy and ceaseless warfare for a full generation, cultivation and population had been greatly reduced, and wolves in large packs infested the villages on the Sahyadri hill-side. Dadaji very wisely offered rewards for killing them. He conciliated the Maval hill-men by rewards and kind treatment, and induced them to settle in the valleys and extend the cultivation by offering very liberal terms of rent such as a few pice per *bigha* for the first four years, a few annas for the next three years, and the familiar full rate of Malik Amber's assessment only from the eighth year onwards. Thus the whole country was brought under tillage. His strict justice and vigour in punishing wrong doers suppressed lawlessness in the country and caused his name to be still remembered. Dadaji established complete mastery over the Mavals adjacent to the Poona district. The local headmen (*desmukhs*) were mostly won over by

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<sup>1</sup> The more widely accepted date is 19th February 1630.

<sup>2</sup> The Chancellor (*Pesva*), the Accountant-General (*Majumdar*), the Foreign Secretary (*Davir*), and the Paymaster of the Forces (*Sabnis*).

tactful handling and rewards; those who defied his authority were attacked and forced to submit. Thus peace and prosperity were established in that region, and it became a source of wealth and martial strength to the owner of Poona.

Sivaji grew up in solitude away from courts and cities, a mateless child without brother, sister or father. The isolation of their life drew him and his mother very close together and intensified his love for her till it became almost an adoration for a deity. She imparted her own deep religious spirit to her son. From a very early age Sivaji was thrown on his own resources and learnt to carry out his own ideas unaided, and to take the initiative. He became skilled in fighting, riding and other manly games. From the sturdy and brave race of the Mavle people, Sivaji drew his earliest comrades, his many devoted followers, and his best soldiers. In the company of Mavle chieftains of his own age, young Sivaji wandered over the hills and forests of the Sahyadri range, hardening himself to a life of strenuous exertion. He began to love independence and loathe a life of servile luxury.

### **Sivaji's early tentative efforts.**

The hill forts have played a part in the history of Maharashtra unequalled by any other country. The whole of the Western Ghats often terminate towards the top in a wall of smooth rock the highest points of which form natural fortresses, where the only labour required is to get access to the level space on the summit. Various princes at different times have cut flights of steps up the rocks, fortified the entrance with gateways, and erected towers to command the approaches. In many of them there are springs of the finest water or tanks filled during the rainy months.

Each fort was held by a *killedar* who was almost always directly under the Sultan's Government and independent of the *jagirdar* of the surrounding country. A few villages below the fort were assigned to the *killedar* for feeding his garrison and their cattle. Thus Sivaji found in these numberless hillforts so many hostile garrisons planted in the midst of his own *jagir* territory, and he could not form a compact State unless he wiped out this rival authority.

After 1642, the Government of Muhammad Adil Sah fell into increasing decline owing to the Sultan's drunken habits, and alcoholism led to his being stricken down in 1646 with paralysis which kept him a bed-ridden invalid till his death ten years later. His chief ministers and best generals were all this time busy extending his dominions in the Western Karnatak (Ikeri, Basavapattan, Sera), Central Mysore (Bangalore, Srirangapatan, Bellur, Nandiyal) and the Eastern Karnatak (Vellore, Jinji, etc.). But the Poona district lying in the neglected north-western corner and being a recent acquisition by the Moghal treaty of 1636, had not been really brought under the control of the Bijapur Government.

We have definite evidence that in 1644 Sahaji had turned refractory and his agent Dadaji Kond Dev was seizing territory in the Sinhagad region, so that an Adil Sahi force had to be sent against him.

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A little later, about 1646, Sivaji gained the fort of Torna by tricking its Adil Sahi commandant. He also built some new fortifications in the neighbouring hills. But no notice of these acts was taken at the Bijapur court. After the death of Dadaji, Sivaji got possession of some outlying parts of his father's *jagir* such as Cakan, Indapur, and Baramati, and also secured the fort of Kondana by bribing its Adil Sahi governor.

Soon afterwards his progress was suddenly stopped by the news of the arrest of his father before the fortress of Jinji (25th July 1648) order of the Bijapur Government. The cause was that the Bijapuri Prime Minister and Generalissimo had evidence of Sahaji's intrigues with his master's enemies, the Qutb Sah and Sri Ranga Rayal. The captive was brought to Bijapur, but kept in honourable detention in charge of a Muslim noble. In the meantime, the Bijapuri forces tried without success to wrest Kondana from Sivaji and Bangalore from Sambhaji, his elder brother. At last Adil Sah wisely made peace, conciliated Sahaji and restored him to his estates and honours (16 May 1649), on condition of his surrendering Bangalore, Kandarpi, and Kondana. So, Sivaji stayed his hand against Bijapur for some years, after gaining the fort of Purandar by intervening in the disputed succession of its three brother-owners and then turning them out of the fort to live outside on a small land-grant (8th October 1648).

But seven years later he had increased and consolidated his power and felt that he had nothing to fear from Bijapur now, as the Adil Sahi Government was threatened with absorption by Prince Aurangzeb, the Moghal Governor of the Deccan. He first laid his hand on the State of Javli, the heritage of the More family (named after Candrarav More), which covered practically the whole of the Satara district. This principality by its position barred the path of Sivaji's ambition in the south and south-west of his small Poona *jagir*. Moreover, the Mores were jealous of the upstart Bhosles and naturally formed the core of local opposition to Sivaji's further advance at the cost of their common sovereign, the Adil Sah. But Sivaji by a daring combination of diplomacy and rapid movement resulting in the killing of the two leading More chieftains, seized their capital (15th January 1656) and annexed the whole principality, including the rock fortress of Rayagad, which was to be his future capital. Two miles west of Javli he built a new fort, Pratapgad, and here he installed his patron goddess Bhavani.

A few months later, Aurangzeb invaded Bijapur on the plea that Ali Adil Sah II, was not a genuine prince of the royal house. A famous captain like Sivaji could not be ignored by any side in such a crisis, and he received tempting offers from both. In the end he felt it more profitable to side with Bijapur and enrich himself than to join the Moghals, who were too deceitful to be relied upon and too strong to be defied afterwards.

Two of Sivaji's captains, Manaji Bhosle and Kasi, crossed the Bhima and plundered Camargonda and Raisin, then in Moghal hands (end of April 1657). An attempt to loot the *peth*

of Ahmadnagar was defeated, but Sivaji in person entered the city of Junnar by escalade on a dark night (30th April) and carried away an immense amount of booty. The Maratha plunder in the Ahmadnagar district was stopped by a rapid march and great victory of the Moghal general Nasiri Khan on 4th June. Then began counter raids by the Moghal cavalry into Sivaji's own possessions. Then the monsoon stopped the fighting.

When in September the Bijapur Government made peace with Aurangzeb, Sivaji decided to conciliate the Moghals. His envoy Raghunath Pant met Aurangzeb (25th January 1658) and secured a letter of pardon for the Maratha chief. Aurangzeb then set out on his march to Hindustan to fight for his father's throne, and for two years after the Moghal power merely bided its time in the Deccan, while a jealous quarrel among the Bijapuri nobles about responsibility for their defeat in the recent war with Aurangzeb, led to the murder of the good Prime Minister, Khan Muhammad (11th November 1657) and deranged the Adil Sahi administration.

The field was clear, and Sivaji was not slow to rush into it. As soon as the rains ceased he burst into Konkan. The northern part of this coast-strip formed the Kalyan or modern Thana district, and was governed by a Bijapuri noble, Mulla Ahmad of the Navayat clan. In the absence of the governor at Bijapur, Sivaji easily seized Kalyan and Bhivandi (24 October 1657), and next the fort of Mahul (8 January 1658), once Sahaji's last refuge. Then, having set up his own administration in the Kalyan district, he pushed southwards into the Kolaba district, as far as the neighbourhood of Mahad, where he stopped. Thus he became master of the whole of North Konkan except the sea-ports and the adjacent lands on the west coast, which still belonged to Bijapur, the Siddis, and the Portuguese. The country southwards from Mahad was won later.

During the years 1658 and 1659 the war among Shah Jahan's sons for the throne of Delhi kept the Moghal Government too busy to attend to the Deccan. The Adil Sahi court seized this respite to bring its rebel vassals to order. An army was detached to suppress Sivaji. Its commander was Afzal Khan (original name Abdullah Bhatnari) who had shown conspicuous courage and ability in his master's wars, and now occupied the foremost place in the council of the regent queen Bari Sahiba. But the recent invasion of Bijapur by Aurangzeb had so weakened that Government that only ten thousand horse and foot could be spared to follow Afzal Khan in this arduous enterprise.

As early as April 1659, the Bijapur Government sent a circular letter to the *desmukhs* of Maval to join their forces to Afzal Khan's and help him in overpowering Sivaji. Some of them responded to the command, but a few also yielded to Sivaji's appeal in the name of Hindu independence to side with him. Leaving Bijapur at the end of the monsoons, Afzal Khan first raised money by sacking the famous Hindu temples and demolishing their idols, at Pandharpur Jejuri and Tuljapur (September). Then marching towards Wai, the seat of his *subhedari* he seized the chief of Phaltan and extorted



2½ lakhs of rupees from him, and let terror and sacrilege loose on Sivaji's possessions. As the official history of Adil Sah records "The Khan's cavalry rode over the country of Siva. Many of the enemy were slain, and the rest fled into holes".

Sivaji immediately withdrew from Poona and took post with all his troops in the broken and wooded Javli district, whence it was impossible for Afzal Khan to expel him by force. The Khan's new policy was to lure Sivaji into a trap and then seize or kill him. He sent his steward Krsnaji Bhaskar to Sivaji, with this message; "Your father has long been a great friend of mine. Come and meet me and I shall use my influence to make Adil Sah pardon you and confirm you in the possession of the forts and Konkan territory that you have seized".

Sivaji was in a terrible dilemma as to how he should reply to Afzal Khan, who had established a reputation for treachery and atrocity; he had slain Kasturi Ranga, the Raja of Sera, after inviting him to a conference for making surrender (1639) and was implicated in the murder of the Vazir Khan Muhammad when coming to wait on the dowager Queen of Bijapur. Besides, it was widely known and even reported to the English merchants of Rajapur, that "because the Queen knew, with that strength (only 10,000 men) he was not able to resist Sivaji, she had counselled him to pretend friendship with his enemy, which he did." \*

Sivaji also learnt through his own spies among Afzal Khan's officers that the Khan meant to arrest him by treachery. So, he made up his mind to fight in self defence, rather than yield to such delusive calls of friendship.

With masterly cleverness he completed his arrangements for turning his enemy's weapon against him. He agreed to visit Bijapur and make his submission if only Afzal Khan first gave him a personal assurance of safety. It was settled that the two chiefs should meet in a tent pitched below the fort of Pratapgad, leaving their troops behind, and there exchange oaths of submission and protection.

On 10th November 1659, Afzal Khan was the first to reach the tent ; Sivaji arrived after some time, both very slenderly attended. Sivaji mounted the raised platform, the Khan advanced a few steps and opened his arms to receive him in his embrace. Suddenly, Afzal tightened his clasp and held Sivaji's neck in his left arm with an iron grip, while with his right hand he drew his short straight sword and struck at the side of Sivaji. The hidden chain armour under the Maratha chief's coat rendered the blow harmless. Feeling himself about to be strangled, Sivaji promptly ripped open the bowels of the Khan with the steel tigers' claws which were fastened to his left hand with iron rings. As the wounded man relaxed his hold, Sivaji drove his thin sharp dagger into his body, wrested himself free, and ran away to his own followers standing below. Afzal's head was cut off and his few attendants killed.

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\* Rivington's letter to the E. I. Co., 10th December 1659.

Then, running up to Pratapgad, Sivaji fired a signal gun. At once his troops lying in ambush round the source of the Koyna fell upon the panic—stricken leaderless soldiers of Afzal, encamped carelessly in the low valley. The invaders were easily routed and all their camp and baggage plundered by the Marathas.

Then the victorious Marathas poured into South Konkan and the Kolhapur district, capturing many places including the fort of Panhala (December 1659—February 1660). But here he was promptly besieged by the Bijapuri general Siddi Jauhar (created Salabat Khan) and compelled to make a hair-breadth escape in the dark night of 13th July. His garrison yielded the fort on 22nd September to Adil Sah.

### **Regular war with the Moghals.**

Aurangzeb, after being firmly seated on the throne of Delhi, sent Saista Khan, one of his highest generals, as Governor of the Deccan, to suppress Sivaji. This noble entered Poona on 9th May 1660, after brushing aside the Maratha opposition on the way. Then he took the fort of Cakan after a siege of 54 days, but at a cost of 868 men killed and wounded on his own side (15 August). Early next year he wrested parts of the Kalyan district from Sivaji's men. Though his lieutenant Kartalb Khan was surprised and defeated at Umbarkhind (3 February 1661), Saista Khan recovered Kalyan itself in May. But Sivaji remained master of the southern part of the coast down to Danda-Rajpuri.

On 5th April 1663, Sivaji struck a blow which created as much terror and bewilderment among the Moghal soldiery as his slaying of Afzal Khan had done at the Adil Sahi court. In that dark night, with only 200 men he noiselessly penetrated into Saista Khan's harem in Poona surprised and wounded him and retired in safety. In the scuffle one son and one captain as well as forty attendants and six wives and slave-girls of the Khan were killed and the Khan himself had his fingers cut off. The Marathas lost only six men killed. Henceforth, supernatural powers were ascribed to Sivaji; no place was believed to be proof against his entrance and no feat impossible for him.

Aurangzeb in anger transferred Saista Khan to Bengal; (December), but while the change of Subhedars was taking place at Aurangabad, the capital of Moghal Deccan, Sivaji crowned his success by the sack of the city of Surat (6th—10th January 1664). With marvellous rapidity and secrecy, he made long marches and quite unexpectedly appeared before Surat on 6th January. No defence was offered, the governor and some chief men took refuge, in the fort, leaving the whole city to be pillaged by the Marathas at ease, only the English and the Dutch factory-houses were saved by, the valour and gun fire of those foreigners. The city, consisting mostly of grass huts and wooden cottages, was three-fourths burnt down. The plunder yielded him above a crore of rupees, as he "scorned to carry away anything but gold, silver, pearls, and diamonds and precious ware".

Throughout the year (1664) Sivaji reigned triumphant and ranged over the South Coast and Bijapur territory without a check.



As the English merchants reported, “He is very nimble and active, imposing strange labour upon himself, he flies to and fro with incredible dexterity. Report hath made him an airy body and added wings, or else it were impossible he could be at so many places as he is said to be at all at one time “.

The new viceroy of Moghal Deccan. Prince Muazzam, was a sluggard and so was his lieutenant Jaswant Singh of Marwar. Their siege of Sinhgad failed (May). So, Aurangzeb sent his ablest Hindu and Muslim generals, Mirza Rajah Jai Singh of Amber and Dilir Khan, to put down Sivaji.

By rapid marches Jai Singh arrived from North India, and reached Poona on 3rd March 1665, relieving Jasvant Singh the Moghal commander there. With marvellous foresight and skill and combination and promptitude of blows, he immediately set out on the campaign which he brought to a happy end in three months only, before the monsoon rains could start and enforce suspension of fighting. His clever diplomacy kept Bijapur back from assisting the Maratha chief, and united all the enemies of Siva on his side. Seductive offers were made to Siva's followers to desert him, and above all Jai Singh combined all power in his own hands to pursue his objective with singleness of aim, as the road to success.

Leaving Poona only ten days after his arrival, he reached his base between Sasvad and Purandar (only four miles from the latter) on 31st March, and immediately laid siege to Purandar fort, where the families of Sivaji's officers were sheltered.

Purandar is a double fort, with a crest 4564 feet above sea-level, and a lower fort or *maci* on a broad ledge round the waist of the hill, 300 feet below the crest, and four miles long in its winding circuit. From its north-eastern corner runs a spur for a mile eastwards in a narrow ridge ending with the outwork called Rudra-mal (now Vajragad). This Vajragad commands the *maci* on its northern face where the garrison lived, and Jai Singh decided to capture it first, so as to make the *maci* untenable by gunfire from Vajragad.

By incessant bombardment, the Moghals demolished one tower of Vajragad; Dilir Khan's Pathans stormed the lower end, and forced the garrison to capitulate (14th April). Fire was opened from the position thus won, upon the *maci* of Purandar, while Jai Singh's flying columns ranged through the Maratha country, plundering the villages and preventing relief from coming to Purandar. The Maratha efforts to raise the siege were many, but they failed in the end. Advancing along the spur, Dilir Khan laid siege to the *maci* and on 30th May stormed the White Tower, and two days later the Black Tower that guarded the entrance to the *maci*. Already Murar Baji Prabhu, the gallant *Killedar*, had fallen with 300 of his Mavle infantry in making a desperate sortie upon Dilir Khan's trenches.

Purandar was now doomed. And Sivaji very wisely, decided to make the best term he could by a personal visit to Jai Singh. Of the interview between these two great historic personages we have

graphic contemporary accounts in Jai Singh's Persian despatches to the Emperor and the Memoirs of Niccolao Manucci, a Venetian gunner in the camp of Jai Singh. \*

The meeting took place on 11th June and Sivaji spent a couple of days there as Jai Singh's guest, while the terms were being settled., Jai Singh knew the strength of his own position and his pressure was inexorable. By the Treaty of Purandar, signed on 12th June 1665, Sivaji agreed :—

(1) To cede to the Moghals 23 of his forts with their adjacent lands yielding four lakhs of *hon* a year.

(2) To retain only 12 of his forts and their lands of the annual value of one lakh of *hon*.

(3) To serve the Delhi Government as a loyal vassal, by sending a contingent of 5000 horse under some officer of his own, to fight in the Emperor's wars, these to be paid for by the assignment of a suitable *jagir* from the Moghals.

In addition, Jai Singh made a secret engagement with Sivaji, by which the Delhi Government promised to confirm Sivaji in the possession of lands worth four lakhs of *hon* a year in the Konkan lawlands (Payin-ghat), and five lakhs in the uplands (*Balaghat*) after he had himself conquered them from Adil Sah, provided that he paid to the emperor a *nazarana* of forty lakhs of *hon* in thirteen annual instalments.

So, Purandar was surrendered to the Moghals, on 12th June and the other forts followed. What Sivaji retained included Rajgad, Rairi (Rayagad), Pratapgad, Javli, and Vardhangad. The Moghals gained possession of Purandar, Sinhgad, Lohgad, Mahuli, Kohij, Songad, etc., besides retaining Poona, Kalyan, Trimbak, Cakan and Sivner (Junnar) which they had seized earlier.

#### *Sivaji allied to the Moghals.*

After closing the war with Sivaji, Jai Singh set out on the invasion of Bijapur on 19th November 1665. Under the terms of the Treaty of Purandar, Sivaji accompanied him with a contingent of 2000 Maratha horse and 7000 Mavle infantry. At first the advance was unresisted, and the Bijapuri forts on the way, Phaltan, Thathvada, Khatav and Mangalvedhe, were easily gained by the Moghals. The first battle took place on 25th December, when a detachment under Dilir Khan and Sivaji advanced ten miles from Jai Singh's camp and fought a Bijapuri army under Sarza Khan, Khavas Khan, Jadav Rav of Kalyani, and Vyankoji (the step-brother of Sivaji). The Deccanis evaded the charges of the heavy cavalry of Delhi, but harassed them by their " Cossack tactics " of loose fighting. The enemy retired at the end of the day, but as soon as the Moghal detachment set out to return to their camp, the Bijapuris turned back and galled them from the rear and the wings.

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\* Storia do Mogor, ii, 136.

After two days, Jai Singh resumed his march, and on the 28th fought another battle of the same kind, with the same result. On 29th December, he arrived within 12 miles of Bijapur, and came to a halt, as the country round had been devastated by the Bijapuris the wells filled and all trees cut down. A Bijapuri detachment under the famous general Sarza Khan was raiding the Moghal dominions in Jai Singh's rear. It was impossible to take Bijapur fort by siege or corruption of the Adil Sahi nobles. So, Jai Singh in despair, began his retreat on 25th January 1666.

He sent Sivaji to make a diversion on the west by trying to wrest Panhala from Adil Sahi hands. On 16th January, Sivaji delivered an assault on Panhala, three hours before sunrise. But the surprise failed, the garrison offered a stubborn defence, and Sivaji had to retire baffled after sacrificing a thousand of his men on the hillside. For this result, Netaji Palkar's failure to turn up at the right time and attack his sector of the fort was responsible, and he was punished by dismissal from his post of Sivaji's Master of the Horse (*sar-i-laskar*) or second-in-command. The degraded officer at once went over to the Bijapuri side and began to raid Moghal territory. But Jai Singh lured him back (20th March) with large promises of reward. The Marathas had no further part in Jai Singh's invasion of Bijapur, which ended in complete failure; not a single fort taken by him during his advance remained in Moghal hands at its end. After much indecisive moving about, Mirza Raja died broken down and in disgrace, at Burhanpur on his way back to Delhi (28th August 1667).

Jai Singh had persuaded Aurangzeb to adopt the policy of inviting Sivaji to visit the Emperor in person and there conciliating him with high favours, so that in future he might be always on the Moghal side and counteract the alliance between Bijapur and Golkonda for wresting the Moghal territorial gains in the Deccan, because Sivaji's adhesion would have made such an anti-Moghal confederacy invincible. With many promises of high gains in territory and dignity as the gift of the Emperor, Jai Singh at last induced the Maratha chief to pay that visit to the imperial Court at Agra, which ended in completely revolutionising the destiny of the Maratha race.

The recently discovered Jaipur State records in the Rajasthani dialect and Jai Singh's full Persian correspondence which Jadunath Sarkar was the first to bring to light, have entirely set aside the hitherto prevalent story of this historic visit to Agra. In the light of the most authentic contemporary evidence, we see that it began as a comedy of errors due to Rajput incompetence but developed into a tragedy through Aurangzeb's crooked policy; thus the honest and highly politic plan of Jai Singh in which the journey originated was nullified, and Sivaji was turned into an eternal enemy of the Moghals.

After making masterly arrangements for the safety of his territories during his absence and their orderly administration even if

he were treacherously arrested or killed, Sivaji left Rajgad on 5th March and arrived one stage short of Agra on 11th May 1666. He was to have been presented to Aurangzeb at that Emperor's birthday *darbar* in the morning of the 12th. But owing to his host Kumar Ram Singh Kachva's bungling, there was confusion in the customary arrangements for welcoming him by advancing (*istiqbul*) and he met the Kumar in the heart of city, at noon, after the public *darbar* in Agra fort-palace had broken up, and there was no time left for instructing him in Court etiquette. Ram Singh, in order not to miss this auspicious day, hurried Sivaji on to Agra fort, where the Emperor was now holding the select Audience (*Divan-i-Khas*).

Sivaji was presented to the Emperor, who received his gifts but said not one word of welcome in return. Then the Maratha chief was led back from before the throne and made to stand in the third row of nobles, the *five-hazaris*, even behind Jasvant Singh. He felt so much humiliated that he angrily protested to Ram Singh, ran away from the presence to a corner behind the pillars, and refused to accept a Moghal *mansab*. His wrangle with Ram Singh who tried in vain to pacify him, created a disturbance in the Court, and threw Sivaji himself into a fever. So, the Emperor told Ram Singh to take Sivaji back to his tent, without a formal leave-taking, and there pacify him.

Immediately after this strange scene, the Court-party opposed to Jai Singh, the nobles who had suffered from Sivaji's aggressions, and even the Emperor's aunt and eldest sister combined to urge Aurangzeb to punish Sivaji for his rudeness and thus avenge Saista Khan. Aurangzeb's inner council induced him to accept the policy of either killing Sivaji or confining him in a fortress. But Jai Singh's solemn promise to Sivaji that he would be allowed to return home in safety and Kumar Ram Singh's insistence that he himself should be killed first before Sivaji was harmed, stayed the Emperor's hands, and he wrote to Jai Singh to learn what promises that Raja had actually made to Sivaji. In the meantime, Sivaji was kept in detention in charge of Ram Singh, but with a guard of the Agra police-prefect's men round his tents.

Finding that he had nothing to hope for from the justice or generosity of the Emperor or his ministers, Sivaji turned to effecting his own deliverance. He sent home most of the officers and escort that he had brought with himself to Agra, and then in the night of 19th August escaped from his tent with his son Sambhaji (a boy of nine) concealed in big baskets of sweets which he had been daily sending out for distribution to holy men. By moving in the disguise of an Hindu ascetic, with breathless speed, through unfamiliar jungle routes, he reached his home in safety, but there fell ill from the effect of the privations he had to undergo during his flight.

For full three years after his return from Agra (1667, 1668 and 1669), Sivaji's lived very quietly, and in peace with the Moghals. He used this respite to organise his government, provision and repair

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his forts, and consolidate and extend his power on the western coast, at the expense of Bijapur and the Siddis. Prince Muazzam, the new viceroy of Moghal Deccan, was an indolent pleasure-seeker. Sivaji appealed to the Prince's favourite Jasvant Singh to become his patron, and at their recommendation Aurangzeb recognised Sivaji as a Raja and a loyal vassal (early 1668). A Maratha contingent under Pratap Rav joined the Moghal prince at Aurangabad. The peace was broken at the end of 1669 by Aurangzeb's confiscation of Sivaji's new *jagirs* in Berar, and his secret orders to seize Sivaji's son when attending Muazzam's court at Aurangabad as his father's deputy.

Sivaji opened his offensive with great vigour and immediate success, as the Moghal power in the Deccan was paralysed by a deadly quarrel between Prince Muazzam and his chief general Diler Khan. In March 1670, the English factors at Surat wrote, "Sivaji marches now not as before as a thief, but in gross with an army of 30,000 men, conquering as he goes". He recovered many of the forts he had ceded to the Moghals by the Treaty of Purandar, especially Kondana, in capturing which the gallant Tanaji Malusare fell (4th February 1670). In October he looted Surat a second time, carrying off 66 lakhs of rupees worth of booty. When returning from Surat with his plunder, he was intercepted by Daud Khan between Vani and Dindori (17th October), and an obstinate battle was fought with heavy loss on both sides; Ikhlas Khan Miana was wounded here.

The Marathas flushed with victory burst into all directions. The Pesva recovered the fort of Trimbak; Pratap Rav (Sivaji's commander-in-chief) captured Ahivant and three other forts in the Candor range, and made a daring and successful raid into Khandes and Berar, looting Bahadurpura (two miles from Burhanpur) and Karinja, a city famous for its countless wealth, from which a crore worth of booty was carried off. Moro Trimbak Pingle at the same time raided West Khandes and Baglana; Salhir, the chief fort of Baglana was taken (c 5th January 1671). But next month the Moghals recovered Ahivant from the Marathas.

After the recess of the monsoon months, Aurangzeb's new generals Bahadur Khan and Diler replaced the slow Mahabat Khan. Diler seized Poona and massacred all its inhabitants above the age of 9 years (end of December 1671). But the Moghal force besieging Salhir was defeated with heavy slaughter, and all its camp and baggage taken by Pratap Rav and the Pesva, and soon afterwards Mulhir was captured, completing Sivaji's conquest of Baglana, (February 1672).

Then the energies of the Marathas overflowed into the *Koli* country or Kolvan; here the Javhar and Ramnagar (Dharampur) States were conquered (June-July 1672), thus giving Sivaji a short and easy route from Kalyan up North Konkan to Surat. That great port now became subject to constant extortion by Maratha armies, while the Nasik district no longer remained safe for the Moghals.



In November of this year, Sivaji's cavalry made a lightning raid into Berar and Telangana, the Moghal forces being baffled in their attempt to come up with them. But in the end the invaders were expelled without having been able to gain much (December).

Ali Adil Sah II died on 24th November 1672 and soon afterwards the government of Bijapur fell into weakness and disorder, which Sivaji fully utilised. He took Panhala (6th March 1673) and Satara (27th July), while Pratap Rav Gujar raided the inland parts of Bijapur Kanara, looting Hubli and many other rich cities. Sivaji himself, at the head of a vast army, plundered and occupied Kanara, (October—December 1673). The Moghal viceroy could do nothing serious, and the rising of the Khaibar Pass Afghan clans called away Aurangzeb himself from Delhi (April 1674), leaving his Deccan representative without hope of support. Sivaji seized this political lull to crown himself, as a sovereign king, on 6th June 1674.

#### *Conquest of West Kanara Coast.*

Sivaji's annexation of the Kanara coast was effected in 1675, but it had been preceded by many years of raiding and small local conquests. After the fall of Afzal Khan, he had first pushed into the Ratnagiri district, but spared Rajapur port, as belonging to his family friend Rustam-i-Zaman (1660). It was however occupied on 3rd March 1661, and so also was Kharepatan. All the country northwards, forming the petty State of Sringarpur was now annexed by him. Desultory fighting followed for some years. In 1663, he made a dash to Vengurla by way of Kolhapur and Kudal, exacting blackmail but giving the local people his safe assurances. Vengurla was held by a garrison of his own (June). Throughout the second half of 1664 Adil Sah renewed his attack on Bednur, and the coast region was disturbed, which enabled Sivaji to reign victoriously and uncontrolled, daily increasing in strength.

Lakham Savant, the chief of Kudal, had earlier made peace by accepting Sivaji's vassalage, but he now conspired with the Bijapuri General Khavas Khan to recover his principality. In the first battle, early in October 1664, Khavas repulsed Sivaji after a bloody contest. Sivaji, however, turned aside to intercept, defeat and kill Baji Ghorpade, the chief of Mudhol, who was bringing reinforcements to Khavas, and then sacked the town of Mudhol, massacring all the Ghorpades found there (end of October). Khavas fled away from Kudal and Banda, and Sivaji burst into the Savantvadi district, the petty *desais* of which were driven into Goa territory for refuge, and the country placed under a *desai* loyal to Sivaji. He next plundered Vengurla and Hubli (December). None could check him in his conquering and plundering career in this region. On 8th February 1665, he embarked at Malvan in his fleet and sacked Basrur (Barcelore), the chief port of the Bednur kingdom, but spared



Karvar for a contribution. Indecisive fighting went on for some years afterwards, the places frequently changing hands between Sivaji and the Bijapuri barons.

In 1673, Sivaji made his second incursion into the upland of Bijapuri Kanara; Pratap Rav sacked Hubli (May). Bahlol Khan the Bijapuri general, was enveloped at Umrani (15 April) but bought a safe retreat from Pratap Rav. Next year Pratap Rav was killed in making a rash charge on Bahlol Khan with only six horsemen at Nesari (24th February 1674), but Anand Rav rallied the Maratha army, raided Sampganv (20 miles from Bankapur), and defeated Bahlol Khan in March. The Adil Sahis were able to expel the Marathas from the Karvar country. Sivaji himself set out on Dasara day (10 October 1673), with a vast force, robbed many rich towns, including Bankapur and reached Kadra, but was defeated and forced to evacuate Kanara, early in December. But in April next (1674) Sivaji was back in the Karvar country and kept his hold on Kudal. In 1675, Sivaji took the frontier fort of Phonda from Bijapuri hands after a hard fought siege (8th April—6th May) in consequence of which all the Karvar district as far south as the Gangavati river, passed from Bijapuri possession into Maratha hands. The Bednur Rani promised Sivaji an annual tribute. His possession of South Konkan and North Kanara remained unchallenged till his death.

Sivaji celebrated his coronation in June 1674 with full Hindu ceremonials, at a cost of nearly fifty lakhs of rupees, mostly in the form of money gifts and other presents to holy Brahmins and his own ministers, and charity to nearly fifty thousand Brahmins assembled in Rayagad for four months. There were two coronations on different dates, celebrated according to Vedic rites by Gaga Bhatta and Balam Bhatta and according to Tantrik rites by Niscal Puri. The significance of the coronation lay in Sivaji's assertion of the claim that the Bhosles were pure *Ksatriyas* entitled to all the privileges of the twice-born castes, and that he was a suzerain monarch (*Cakravarti*, *Chatrapati*) and no longer the vassal of any other Power, Adilsah or the *Padsah*. The performance of the long forgotten Vedic ritual was a trumpet blast informing the Indian world that a Hindu Svaraj was born once more.

#### *Sivaji's Conquest of Eastern Karnatak.*

The war in the Deccan having now receded to the South, Aurangabad and Ahmadnagar were found to be posts too far north to serve as a convenient base for the Moghals. So, the new viceroy Bahadur Khan (1672-1677) encamped at Pedganv on the Bhima eight miles south of Camargonda, where permanent cantonments grew up, to which the name of Bahadurgad was given.

After the death of Ali Adil Sah II (1672), the Bijapur government rapidly broke up, the boy Sultan was a puppet and factious nobles quarrelled for monopolising power and wealth. The Moghal Subhedar found it more profitable to side with one or other of these Adil Sahi factions than to face the risky and difficult duty of fighting Sivaji. The Maratha King's clever diplomacy by secretly bribing Bahadur Khan

ensured Moghal neutrality for some years; while Bijapur was paralysed and Golkonda became his ally. Seizing this opportunity, Sivaji made his grandest conquest, that of the Eastern Karnatak.

The dominions of the fallen Vijaynagar empire in that quarter had been mostly seized by Adil Sah and Qutb Sah. Bijapur had annexed northern and eastern Mysore, and the Madras Plain from the Palar river southwards to the Kolerun, i.e., from Vellore to 20 miles north of Tafijore, while Golkonda had seized the country north of the Palar river, namely from Cicacole to Madras. South of the Kolerun lay the kingdoms of Tanjore (conquered by Sivaji's step brother Vyankoji in 1675) and Madura. The Qutb Sahi minister Madanna Pandit, planned to conquer Bijapur Karnatak with the help of Sivaji, and a secret alliance between the two sovereigns was arranged by Sivaji's envoy, Pralhad Niraji.

Leaving his capital at the beginning of 1677, Sivaji reached Hyderabad early in February, maintaining strict discipline among his vast army and preventing any robbery or molestation of the villagers on the way. He was welcomed by Abul Hasan Qutb Sah, and during a month's stay at Hyderabad made an offensive and defensive alliance with that Government, according to which the Sultan agreed to pay him a subsidy of four and a half lakhs of rupees a month and assist him with a contingent of 5,000 horsemen and some guns and ammunitions to co-operate in the conquest of the Karnatak. In return Sivaji promised to his ally such parts of his conquests as had not formerly belonged to his father Sahaji. For defending him against the Moghals, Qutb Sah promised to the Marathas one lakh of *hon* every year.

Descending into the Madras plains, Sivaji took the strong fort of Jinji by treaty with its Bijapuri Governor Nasir Muhammad Khan (May), promising him a money compensation, and laid siege to Vellore (which was yielded to him for a price as late as August 1678). As the Maratha incursion swept over the country, only a few fortified places offered any resistance, the rich men every where fleeing to the woods or to the European trading cities on the coast. Ser Khan Lodi, the Adil Sahi Governor of the North Trichinopoly district (with his capital at Vali-Kandapuram), was defeated in battle (20th June) and forced to give up all his territories. Then marching to Tirumala vadi, on the north bank of the Kolerun river, Sivaji halted and called his brother to an interview with him. Vyankoji came, but rejecting Sivaji's claim for the surrender of three-fourths of what Sahaji had left at the time of his death, the Tanjore Raja cleverly escaped to his own dominions (22nd July). Finally, in November, Sivaji set out on his return, exacting money from every place on his way, and leaving an army under Santaji Bhosle to administer his new conquests. He reached Panhala at the beginning of April 1678.

The territory annexed by Sivaji in the course of this expedition covered an area of 180 miles by 120 miles, with 86 forts and

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a revenue of 44 lakhs of rupees; Jinji was the seat of its Governor. On his return journey he took easy possession of his father's *Jagir* districts of Kolar, Uskota, Bangalore, Balapur and Sera, in the eastern and central parts of modern Mysore. These latter areas were, however, restored to his brother Vyankoji a year later, as a friendly act.

Soon after his return from the East Coast, Sivaji had a rupture with the Golkonda Government. Qutb Sah had borne all the expenses of this expedition, but Sivaji had not kept his promise by giving him a single one of the forts conquered there, nor shared the fabulous booty of that land of gold. So, the Sultan of Golkonda arranged a mutual arrangement among the ministers of Bijapur and helped them with funds to prepare for a war to "confine Siva to Konkan". But this anti-Maratha coalition was broken up; the slothful Bahadur Khan had been replaced by that active and unyielding enemy of Sivaji, Dilir Khan, who wrongly decided to capture Bijapur in alliance with the Afghan faction at the capital, instead of crushing Sivaji first by the united forces of the three Muslim Powers.

Sivaji's eldest son, Sambhaji was a brave but capricious, selfwilled and depraved youth, and his father had to detain him under watch in Parali fort. If we can believe the story told later by the poet Kavindra of Nevasa, who was an eulogist of Sahu Chatrapati, Sivaji had been instigated by his wife Soyra Bai to grant Maharastra and the old dominions to her son Rajaram (a boy of ten) and offer the newly conquered and unsettled Karnatak territory to Sambhaji as his heritage, and Sambhaji naturally objected to it. Dilir Khan, knowing of the division of Sivaji's ministers into two factions for the rival heirs, sent secret messages to Sambhaji and induced that prince to escape from Parali to the Moghal Camp (13th December 1678).

With his new Ally Dilir Khan stormed the fort of Bhopalgad (45 miles south-west of Pandharpur) where Sivaji's stores and the families of his chief subjects were lodged for safety (2nd April 1679), and treated the prisoners with brutal ferocity. At the end of the rains, he opened his invasion of Bijapur whose Vazir Siddi Masaud made a defensive pact with Sivaji. The invasion was a failure and Dilir had to retire in disgrace. Even Sambhaji was induced to return to his father (4th December).

In November Sivaji effectually helped the defence of Bijapur by raiding Moghal territory in the rear of Dilir Khan, with 18,000 horsemen, plundering and burning all the places on the way. At Jalna his troopers sacked the hermitage of the Muslim Saint Sayyad Jan Muhammad, where the property of the rich men of that city had been deposited for safety. As the Marathas, loaded with booty, were retreating they were enveloped by Moghal pursuers under Ranmast Khan and Kesari Singh, but escaped after fighting bloody rearguard actions and fleeing through hill-tracks for three days and nights.

After reaching Rayagad (early in December), Sivaji tried to reform Sambhaji by persuasion, but found it necessary to continue his detention at Panhala.

On 4th April 1680, Sivaji died after a short illness, when still in his 53rd year.

*Sivaji's achievements and character.*

The Maratha State, backed by the nation, was the creation of Sivaji. The secret of his success lay in his inborn genius for action and leadership and the nobility of his character. His conduct was marked by a high standard of morality, and he remained throughout life abstemious, free from vice, and devoted to religion. As a king he extended his toleration and bounty to all sects, opened the public service to talent regardless of caste or creed, and ensured efficiency and purity of administration. A new vista of expansion and glory was opened to all able men of the country. He had the born leader's personal magnetism and threw a spell over all who knew him, choosing the best instruments by an unfailing judgment of his servants' characters. No other Hindu has shown such constructive genius in modern times.

At the time of his death, Sivaji's kingdom included all the country (excepting the Portuguese possessions) from Ramnagar to Karvar; its eastern boundary embraced Baglana in the north and then ran southwards through the middle of the Nasik and Poona districts, encircling the whole of the Satara and much of the Kolhapur districts. These formed the natural expansion of his "Old Dominions" or '*Svaraj*'. A recent but permanent acquisition was the Western Karnatak or the Kanarese-speaking country from Belgaon to the Tungabhadra opposite Bellary. East of this last province he had conquered a large slice of the Eastern Karnatak from Koppal to Vellore and Jinji, or much of modern Mysore and portions of the Madras districts of Bellary, Ciltur and Arcot, which was ruled by a viceroy at Jinji.

Outside these parts of his kingdom, there was a wide belt of neighbouring territory, where his army invaded every year after the *Dasara* day and exacted tribute (called *Khandani* or *Cauth*), because popularly calculated at one-fourth of the land-revenue). It was his policy that his soldiers should "feed themselves at the expense of foreign parts for eight months in the year".

Sivaji was a statesman and not a mere conqueror. We obtain a vivid picture of his civil administration and military organisation in the *Adnyapatra* of the *Amatya* and the *Sabhasad Bakhar*. His council of eight ministers (*Asta Pradhan*) consisted of the *Pesva* (President), *Mujumdar* (Auditor-General), *Vaqenavis* or *Vaqnis* (Court Diarist), *Surnis* (Secretariat Superintendent), *Dabir* (Minister for Foreign Relations), *Senapati* (Commander-in-Chief), *Pandit Rav* (Ecclesiastical head), and *Nyayadhis* (Chief Justice). It was in no

sense a Cabinet, and hardly a Council, because it very seldom met all together, and the king consulted the ministers, when he chose, only individually, except in great crises, which were rare (when it acted like the Privy Council of England on a king's demise). Each Pradhan was only a departmental head.

*Reign of Sambhaji.*

### **1680-1689.**

After the death of Sivaji at Rayagad Annaji *Surnis* and other ministers crowned his second son Rajaram there (21 April 1680). But the army chiefs under Hambir Rav Mohite refused to obey this boy of ten who was a mere puppet in the hands of a ministerial faction; they went over to Sambhaji, who seized control of Panhala fort, and coming to Rayagad gained peaceful possession of the capital (18 June). The leaders of the party against him were at first imprisoned, but later released. In August 1681, a dangerous conspiracy to murder Sambhaji and give the throne to Rajaram was detected and relentlessly suppressed; Annaji Datto, Balaji Avji Prabhu and a few other officers were executed for complicity. Sivaji's widow Soyra Bai, the mother of Rajaram died in prison either by suicide or poisoning.

Thus the able and experienced local men trained by Sivaji were excluded from his son's Government, and Sambhaji fell under the influence of a Kanauji Brahman, on whom he conferred the title of Kavi-kalas (the Pinnacle of Poets), as his only faithful adherent. By this *vazir's* advice the Raja became a worshipper of the Tantrik cult, and the birth of an heir to him (Sahu, on 18, May 1682) after the adoration of the goddess Kali, confirmed the dominance of Kavi-Kalas over the Raja's mind. This sect was abominated by nearly all the Brahmans of Maharashtra, and as a result the reign of Sambhaji was disturbed by frequent plots against him. This is attested by the records of the English merchants of Bombay and the French of Pondicherry.

Hence, the reign of Sambhaji was a period of arrested growth for the Maratha State. Its inner strength was paralysed by the mortal antagonism between Sambhaji's followers and Rajaram's partisans. And this internal weakness was utilised by Aurangzeb, who was present in person in the Deccan with all his best generals and forces. This nearness of his enemy imposed caution on Sambhaji's movements, except westwards, against the Siddis and the Portuguese. Bijapur and Golkonda were now too weak to help him, and soon ceased to exist as independent States.

Sambhaji's troops only carried out the customary raids into Moghal territory wherever they could, every year after *Dasara*, but these sporadic activities were mechanical and did not lead to any extension of his State, nor even its strength. At the end of January 1681,



they looted the suburbs of Burhanpur for three days, digging up the floors of the houses for buried treasure, without any obstruction. In October an attempt to enter Ahmadnagar was defeated.

Muhammad Akbar, the fourth son of Aurangzeb, rebelled against his father in Rajputana, but being defeated fled away from Ajmer to Sambhaji for shelter. He reached Pali (ten miles east of Nagothna) on 1st June 1681, and was hospitably entertained by Sambhaji, who visited him on 13th November. But even with such a valuable pawn in his hands, Sambhaji could do nothing against the Moghal empire. Akbar was a proud, thoughtless, self-indulgent youth, and Sambhaji could never trust him. None of their plans for invading North India or Rajputana in Aurangzeb's absence matured, as the interests of the two allies were not the same. At last, weary of Sambhaji's inaction, Akbar in anger went off to the Goa frontier and lived at Banda (in Savantvadi) and then at Bicolim (which was then a Maratha territory), trying to sail to Persia in a Portuguese ship. Kavi Kalas and Durgadas placated him with fresh promises of Maratha support, and in Sambhaji's war with Goa the Moghal prince acted as a peace-maker (1684). He spent a whole year at Sakharpe (in the Ratnagiri district) and Malkapur and finally left India," in utter despair, in February 1687 for Persia, where he died in exile (November 1704).

Leaving Rajputana in the middle of the year 1681 after patching up a peace, Aurangzeb arrived in the Deccan at Burhanpur, on 13th November, and took post at Aurangabad on 22nd March next year, directing the operations of all his forces. He thus served as a constant check on any grand design of the Marathas. Up to the fall of Bijapur and Golkonda (1686 and 1687) his war with the Marathas went on languidly with no decisive result.

While Sambhaji was busy personally bombarding Janjira (1682), a Moghal force under Sayyad Hasan Ali Khan descended from Junnar into North Konkan and took possession of Kalyan, burning all the Maratha villages on the way. Sahabuddin Khan (afterwards created Firuz Jang) laid siege to Ramsej (April), but failed after repeated attempts, and at last the siege was raised in October. Ranmast Khan reoccupied North Konkan (November) defeating the Pesva and Rupaji Bhosle in many battles. Prince Azam invaded Maharashtra from the east, and once in his absence his heroic wife Jahanzeb Banu inspired her Rajput escort under Anurudh Singh Hada to defeat the Marathas in a great battle, in which 900 Rajputs fell and many Marathas too. The year 1683 saw a strange inactivity on the part of the Emperor, he accomplished nothing notable, because his mind was upset and he could trust nobody.

Sivaji's unrivalled genius was shown by his organising a Maratha navy and creating a chain of sea-forts on the western coast. His first capture of Kalyan (1660) was followed by his forming



a dockyard there and building a navy for the protection of his subjects on the coast strip and promoting marine trade. An Abyssinian Colony, settled in the 15th century on the rocky island of Janjira, with some land-posessions on the coast, such as Danda-Rajpuri, Tala dominated the sea. While Sivaji held the eastern or inland part of the Kolaba district, these Abyssinians (called Siddis) held the western or coast strip. Hence there were frequent skirmishes and cruel raids between the two Powers. Every enemy of Sivaji could count on the help of the Siddis. In 1660 he arrested the coast for a time and even captured Danda, but his annual attacks on Janjira from the mainland always failed, and the Siddis even recovered Danda in 1671. The same chronic fighting continued throughout his reign and Sambhaji's also. A grand assault in 1675-76 failed to dislodge the Siddis, with heavy loss in men and munitions to the Marathas; and also their frequent battles at sea (1676-80) had no decisive result.

The impossibility of capturing Janjira induced Sivaji to create a naval base near it. He fortified the little rocky island of Khanderi (called Kennery in the English records). This post was maintained inspite of many naval battles with the English and Siddi fleets, in which the young Maratha navy triumphed once or twice. But the Siddis fortified the neighbouring island of Underi, defeated the Maratha navy under Daulat Khan and thus neutralised the post at Khanderi (January 1680). Throughout Sambhaji's reign, the policy of the English Council in Bombay was "to keep fair with both" the Siddis and the Maratha Raja by all contrivances. Thus the Siddi fleet with convenient shelter in Bombay harbour close at hand, formed a constant menace to Sambhaji's coast villages. They had sacked Apta twice, in 1673 and 1681. In December 1681—January 1682, Sambhaji in person bombarded Janjira with heavy guns, for 30 days. The attempt failed, and also two battles at sea, in July and October next.

Then Sambhaji invaded the Portuguese dominions for their help to his enemies, especially the Moghal armies invading North Konkan. In April 1683, he raided their territory of the North, i.e., Daman, burning many towns. Caul was assaulted by the *Pesva* without success (August). The Viceroy of Goa attempted to take Phonda by escalade, but was driven back in a disastrous retreat (1 November), losing many hundreds of seamen and Kanarese sepoys. Sambhaji next invaded Goa. On 14th November 1683, his men occupied the island of Santo Estevao (2 miles north-east of Goa), beat back an attack by the Viceroy in person, but evacuated it on the 16th. In December, the Marathas entered and plundered the districts of Salsette and Bardes, for a month. But the invasion of the region by a Moghal army under prince Sah Alam, by the Ramghat pass, drove Sambhaji away in flight to Rayagad. A peace was arranged between him and the Portuguese at Phonda by Kavi Kalis and Prince Akbar (20 January 1684) on the basis of the mutual restitution of conquests.

The invasion of Sah Alam failed through lack of provisions to do any harm to Sambhaji.

While Aurangzeb was involved in the sieges of Bijapur and Golkonda (1685-87), Sambhaji frittered away his strength in small predatory incursions, having “too many irons in the fire” to effect any decisive success. There were frequent desertions to the Moghal side. His rebel vassals kept South Konkan and Kanara in turmoil, while Harji Mahadik, his Viceroy of Jinji, became practically independent on the East Coast. The Moghals gained some successes, such as burning Pacad (at the foot of Rayagad), and capturing Kondana (December 1684). It was recaptured by the Marathas in the succeeding year.

In the midst of this gathering darkness, Sambhaji, attended only by Kavi Kalas and a small escort at Sangamesvar, was surprised and captured by an able Moghal officer, Saikh Nizam, after forced marches in secrecy (1st February 1689). A month later, Sambhaji and Kavi Kalas were cruelly mutilated and killed by order of Aurangzeb at Koreganv (11, March).

The ministers crowned Rajaram at Rayagad on 8th February, but that fort was besieged by Zulfiqar Khan and captured on 19th October, when Sambhaji’s wife Yesu Bai and son Sahu became prisoners of the Moghals. But Rajaram had already slipped out of the fort, and he reached Jinji in disguise on 1st November 1689.

### **RAJARAM.**

In the year 1689 Aurangzeb seemed to have reached the summit of his success. Bijapur, Golkonda, Rayagad had all fallen to him and their kings were his prisoners. But though he had crushed the Maratha King, the heroic Maratha people rose up and in eighteen years totally defeated the power of the Moghal empire directed by its ablest head. In November 1689, Rajaram reached Jinji and set up his independent government there, while his ministers left behind with full power of initiative most effectively organised the national resistance to Aurangzeb in the homeland. The disappearance of one common head and central Government among the Marathas only multiplied Aurangzeb’s difficulties, as every ambitious Maratha captain, armed with a signed grant of Rajaram, fought and raided in a different quarter on his own account. Aurangzeb could not put an end to this people’s war, because there was no Maratha Government or State-army for him to attack and destroy once for all. The Marathas were no longer mere banditti or local rebels, but the one dominating factor of Deccan politics,—an enemy all pervasive across the Indian peninsula from Bombay to Madras, and elusive like the wind, yet overwhelming large Moghal forces like a whirlwind (as Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav proved so often). The Moghals could not defend every place, and the forts won by them were easily recovered by the Marathas as soon as the Emperor’s army retired from them leaving only small garrisons. The local officers

of the Emperor were driven to buy peace from the Maratha captains by secretly promising them an annual blackmail of one-fourth of the revenue. Many imperialists made a concert with the enemy and enriched themselves by robbing the Emperor's own subjects. In fact, the Moghal administration, like that of the Chatrapati, was now dissolved, and outside the petty village-communities there was *do-amli* or rather anarchy. The whole country was fast turning into a wilderness through ceaseless warfare. Every year Aurangzeb's camps in the Deccan lost one lakh of soldiers and camp-followers through war, pestilence or famine, and three times that number of transport animals. The economic exhaustion of the Deccan was complete, "the fields were left devoid of trees and bare of crops, their places being taken by the bones of men and beasts " (Manucci, an eye-witness).

Rajaram was a sickly, softnatured youth, and his State was run by his ministers. At Jinji his chief confidant and real prime minister was Pralhad Niraji, on whom the title of Regent (*Pratinidhi*) was conferred, while the *Pesva* Nilo Moropant Pingle had no power. But the administration of the kingless Maharastra land was very ably conducted by Ramcandra Nilkanth<sup>1</sup> (of Bavda) holding the office of *Amatya*, and Sankaraji Malhar the *Saciv*, and after 1701 by Parasuram Trimbak who rose to be Regent. Among the generals the men of supreme genius were Santaji Ghorpade. Dhanaji Jadhav and Nemaji Sinde.

### Siege of Jinji.

On reaching Jinji, Rajaram took over the government from Harji Mahadik's widow (a daughter of Sivaji), but suffered from extreme financial distress. But the Moghal cause, too, was weakened by the dismissal of the old Qutb Sahi officers in control of the Eastern Karnatak and the rebellion of the Rajput contingents against Aurangzeb's order for temple destruction.<sup>2</sup> Zulfiqar Khan arrived with a vast imperial army and began the siege of Jinji (September 1690) which at first drove the Maratha forces in that province into the defensive.

The three fortified hills of Jinji cover such a vast area that a blockade of them was impossible and the Moghals simply sat down before one gate of it and fired at the defences opposite, but the garrison got supplies by a round-about jungle path on another side. Nor was Zulfiqar in earnest to take the fort, because he had made a secret pact with Rajaram for sparing each other while making an outward show of fighting. Aurangzeb's death was soon expected and in the inevitable dismemberment of his heritage, Zulfiqar planned to make himself independent ruler of the Deccan *subhas*, and placate Rajaram by recognising Maratha independence and ceding the Bijapur *subha* to him (Martin's *Memoires*). Thus the so-called siege dragged on for eight years (September 1690—January 1698), with

<sup>1</sup> Ramcandra was given the tide of *Hakumat-panah* or Dictator, all other officers having to obey him like the king.

<sup>2</sup> Memories of Fr. Martin, iii, 59.

varying success for the two sides. At last under threat of Aurangzeb, Zulfiqar captured the fort on 8th January 1698, after secretly enabling Rajaram to escape from it with all the combatants before its fall. The Bhosle Raja of Tanjore greatly helped his kinsman Rajaram with money and provisions” throughout the siege.

In December 1691, Zulfiqar received reinforcements under his father Asad Khan and Prince Kam Bakhs, the youngest son of Aurangzeb, but could gain no decisive success that year or the next. The coastal country, however, was continually pillaged by the camp-followers and irregular plunderers of both the sides. In 1692, the excessive rainfall reduced the Moghal army to the greatest distress. Early in December two vast Maratha forces, totalling more than 30,000 cavalry, raised in Western India by Ramcandra *Amatya* arrived in Eastern Karnatak. One division of it, under Santaji Ghorpade surprised and captured Ali Mardan Khan, the Moghal *faujdar* of Conjeveram (13 December) with all his property. The other division under Dhanaji Jadhav attacked Zulfiqar’s siege camp and captured Ismail Khan Maka, commanding the western outpost with all his property, and replenished the garrison.

Worse than these disasters, the imperial camp was torn by dissensions between the general and the Prince. Kam Bakhs resented the dominance of Zulfiqar and Asad Khan, and planned to flee to Rajaram. His position being untenable, Zulfiqar abandoned his big guns and fell back from the trenches to his base four miles behind. Here he placed the prince under detention, and went through almost daily fights with the exultant Marathas outside. At last his food being exhausted, he bribed Rajaram’s ministers and effected a safe retreat to Vandivas (23 January 1693). The siege of Jinji was abandoned for the time.

In February 1694, Zulfiqar set out to conquer the South Arcot district, and coerce and exact a large tribute from the Raja of Tanjore. Towards the close of this year he resumed the siege of Jinji, in the same insincere manner. In 1696, Santaji and Dhanaji who had returned from a visit to Maharashtra, pressed Zulfiqar very hard, and forced him to remain on the defensive in Arcot fort. The civil war between Dhanaji and Santaji enabled Zulfiqar to issue forth in 1697, exact tribute from Tanjore and return to Vandivas (June 1697). In November, he renewed the siege of Jinji in right earnest and took it on 8th January next. Rajaram, escaping in time, reached Visalgad in safety in February. Thus the capture of Jinji was undone.

### **People’s War in Maratha Homeland, 1689-1699.**

In 1689, Rajaram after slipping out of his beleaguered capital Rayagad had come to Panhala and there the strategy of national defence was matured. The Moghal power was to be distracted by transferring the Raja and his Government to the far off Eastern Karnatak, while the Delhi forces were to be harassed on the Western



side by another party of his officers under the supreme direction of Ramcandra Bavdekar (*Hakumat Panah* or Dictator) and his energetic assistant Sankaraji Narayan *Saciv*, without having to refer to the distant *Chatrapati* for orders.

At first Aurangzeb's success had been uninterrupted; the Moghals had by the end of the year 1689 gained Salhir, Trimbak, Sinhgad, Rajgad, Panhala and Rayagad. In North Konkan, Matabar Khan, the able *faujdar* of Kalyan, captured many forts. The west coast was mostly under Moghal sway. Caul was lost and the Marathas evacuated Khanderi island for Gheria.

But the Maratha revival started even before the year 1689 was out. Sankaraji struck one or two hard blows.<sup>1</sup> On 25th May 1690 they gained their first resounding success by capturing the Moghal general Rustam Khan with his family and entire camp after killing 1500 imperialists, near Satara. In the same year, Ramcandra recovered Pratapgad, Rajgad and some other forts. Even Panhala was recovered in 1692; the long desultory siege of this last fort by Aurangzeb's grandsons (1692-96) ended in failure.

In 1692, there was a renewal of Maratha activity with conspicuous success in many quarters. Santaji Ghorpade made rapid raids far to the east over the Bijapur plains. He and Dhanaji threatened Western Kanara, Belganv, Dharvar and Bankapur; then they went off to Jinji for nearly a year. In October 1693, Santaji returned and resumed his raids in the West, collecting *Cauth* as far east as Malkhed. Nothing decisive resulted from the sporadic fighting during 1694 and the first ten months of the next year.

In 1695, Santaji Ghorpade by masterly tactics and dispersal and concentration of his swift cavalry divisions, drove Qasim Khan, the Subbedar of Moghal Western Mysore (Sera) and Khanazad Khan, one of the highest Court nobles, in helpless defeat into the small fort of Dodderi, where they were forced by starvation to make an abject surrender, giving up all their property and promising a ransom of 20 lakhs. Qasim Khan himself died. Next Santaji slew Himmat Khan, a very able and vigorous general, (on 20th January 1696) near Basavapattam.

Santaji then went to the Madras Coast, and the rivalry between him and Dhanaji Jadhav for the office of Rajaram's *Senapati* (*Commander-in chief*) developed into a civil war. Dhanaji was defeated by Santaji near Conjevaram. Santaji returned to the home land, but was defeated by Dhanaji near Satara and when fleeing was beheaded by Amrt Riv's brother (June 1697). Next year Jinji fell in January, and Rajaram returned to Visalgad in February, but there could be no revival of Maratha aggression for some time owing to his broken health and financial distress. In October 1699, Rajaram issued from Satara with his family in order to avoid falling into the

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<sup>1</sup> Kesav Sanskrit poem on Rajaram's Journey.

hands of Aurangzeb, who had personally marched out of Islampuri to besiege that fort. The fugitive Raja, was chased by the Moghals, defeated near Parenda and driven back towards Visalgad. In January 1700, Zulfiqar (now created Nusrat Jang) defeated Dhanaji and Hanumant Rav near Masur. But on 2nd March of this year, Rajaram died at Sinhagad of fever caused by the hardships of his swift flying raids. His famous widow Tara Bai assumed control of the administration and crowned her son as Sivaji II, though her co-wife Rajas Bai tried to make her own son Sambhaji II king with the support of a faction among the nobles, and defied Tara Bai, who however triumphed over her rival in the end.

### **Aurangzeb's last campaigns in Deccan.**

After the annexation of the Adilsahi and Qutbsahi kingdoms Aurangzeb marched up and down the country and then settled in camp at Galgali<sup>1</sup> for 3½ years, and finally at Brahmapuri (renamed by him as Islampuri) on the Bhima for 4½ years (1695-1699). Leaving his family in this base-camp (1699), he set out with the army to conquer the Maratha forts, an attempt which occupied him till 1705, a year before his death. This final scene of his life's story was a tragedy of unrelieved failure. It was a repetition of the same sickening tale, a Maratha hill fort captured by him after a vast expenditure of time, money and men, the fort after a few months recovered by the Marathas from the weak Moghal garrison left there, and the siege begun again by the Moghals a year or two later. His soldiers and camp-followers suffered unspeakable hardships from rain and flood, lack of grain and transport, fodder, pestilence and enemy harassment, but the old Emperor refused to listen to advice, make peace, and return to Northern India. The Moghal Empire really perished in Maharashtra, though that country itself was turned into a wilderness by the horrors of endless war. In the end, the last Moghal prince withdrew from Maharashtra in 1709 and Maratha independence was finally achieved.

The Moghal endeavours in these six years from 1699 to 1705 need be told in brief outline only. The Emperor captured Satara on 21st April 1700, Parali (1st June), Panhala (28th May, 1701), Khelna or Visalgad (4th June 1702), Kondana or Sinhgad (18 April 1703), Rayagad (16th February 1704) and Torna (10th March 1704), besides five forts of lesser note, but none of them except Torna was taken by assault, all others capitulated for a price. He, last of all, besieged and took Vagingera, the capital of the Berad tribe (in the present Solapur district, south-east of Bijapur City on 27th April 1705, but became completely broken down in health at Devapur (May—October 1705), and was brought back to Ahmadnagar (January 1706) to die there on 20th February 1707.

### **MARATHA RESISTANCE UNDER TARA BAI.**

Tara Bai's administrative genius and strength of character saved the nation in the awful crisis following Rajaram's death and Sahu's captivity. As Khafi Khan bears witness, "under Tara Bai's guidance

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<sup>1</sup> On the Krsna, 34 miles south-west of Bijapur City.



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Maratha activity began to increase daily. She took into her own hands the control of all affairs, such as the appointment and changing of Generals, the cultivation of the country, and the planning of raids into all the six subhas of the Deccan, nay, even up to Sironj and Mandesor in Malwa, and winning the hearts of her officers, so that all the efforts of Aurangzeb against the Marathas failed”.

The colossal failure of Aurangzeb proves that a nation is greater than even the greatest individual.



Maharashtra State Gazetteers



## **CHAPTER 2 \***

### **EXPANSION OF MARATHA POWER**

#### **(1707-1720)**

#### **DEATH OF AURANGZEB AND AFTER.**

THE DEATH OF AURANGZEB IN FEBRUARY 1707 USHERED a new era in the history of the Deccan. The armies of the Great Moghal were everywhere on the retreat and falling back towards Hindustan from where they had been led forward to the conquest of the Deccan twenty-five years ago. The change was writ large for any discerning person to read. A few months before the Emperor's death the shrewd Manucci had noted King Aurangzeb repents of having entangled himself in the war with the Marathas, for it has not succeeded as he had hoped. The Marathas move about with their armies and pillage the empire in all directions. Every day they display their power and audacity to a greater extent in every part of the empire. In this war over a hundred thousand souls have died yearly, and of animals, horses, pack oxen, camels over three hundred thousand. The great nobles are in distress, their families are begging.<sup>1</sup>

Khafi Khan wrote, 'for all the struggles and schemes the campaigns and sieges of this prince the power of the Marathas increased day by day. By hard fighting, by the expenditure of vast treasures accumulated by Sah Jahan and by the sacrifice of many thousands of men, he had penetrated into their country, had subdued their lofty forts, and had driven them from house and home; still the daring of the Marathas increased, and they penetrated into the old territories of the imperial throne, plundering and destroying wherever they went. In imitation of the Emperor, who with his enterprising armies was staying in these distant mountains, the Maratha Commanders cast the anchor of permanence wherever they penetrated and having appointed Kamavisdars (Revenue Collectors) they passed the years and months to their satisfaction with their wives and children, tents and elephants. Their daring went beyond all bounds; they divided all districts among themselves, and in the imperial fashion they appointed their Subhedars, Kamavisdars and Rahdars, They attack

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\* This Chapter is contributed by Dr. V. G. Dighe.

<sup>1</sup> Storia Do Mogor, by N. Manucci, Vol IV, pp. 96-97.

and destroy the country as far as the borders of Ahmadabad and the districts of Malwa and spread their devastations through the provinces of the Deccan to the environs of Ujjain.<sup>1</sup>

Aurangzeb himself was not unaware of the drift of events and during the last years of his life had tried to come to an understanding with the Marathas, to obtain peace with honour. He had an idea of making use of the captive Sahu to gain his ends, but his suspicious nature defeated the move. On his death, therefore, his son Azam began his march northward without concluding any formal agreement with the Marathas. The Marathas in his rear were soon active and renewed their attacks on imperial territory. The captive Sahu unwilling to be dragged to far off Delhi, began efforts to regain his liberty. The party in his favour at the Emperor's court consisting of Zulfiqar Khan and the Rajput nobility, advised Azam to allow Sahu to return to the Deccan, reclaim his patrimony and rule it as a feudatory of the empire. That would, they contended, ensure the safety of Moghal dominions in the south by having a friendly prince as their neighbour or should Sahu fail to obtain general recognition, embroil the Marathas in civil war and remove this source of danger for some time.

#### **SHAHU.**

Azam, therefore, gave a willing ear to Sahu's proposals. Between March and May 1707 there were two or three audiences between the two princes and robes and titles conveying royal favour were conferred on Sahu. The talks, however, appeared to have a tendency to protract over a long period as the Moghal prince, busy planning the campaign for the throne, had little time for delicate negotiations. Uneasy at the prospects of further detention Sahu left his Moghal friends one night at Duraha near Sironj about 8th May with a very slender escort consisting of his immediate attendants. To elude pursuit he plunged in the Vindhya forests and made his way to Bijagad, south of the Narmada. The Rawal of that place Mohan Singh gave him a cordial welcome and helped him to get on to Sultanpur in Khandes. Near Sultanpur Amrt Rav Kadam Bande joined the Prince's cause and they advanced to Lambkani in Khandes. Word went round that the exile prince was returning and now veteran soldiers, loyal servants, adventurers began to flock round his standard. In his imprisonment Sahu had contacted several Maratha chieftains; to them and to others he wrote tactful and conciliatory letters inviting them to come and help him in the task of rebuilding the shattered Maratha State, or reviving its faded glory. One of the first influential chiefs to respond to the Prince's call was Parsoji Bhosle of Berar. His example proved infectious; Nemaji Sinda, Cinnaji Damodar Moghe, Haibat Rav Nimbalkar and a host of Maratha captains in Khandes hurried to join his standard and swear allegiance to their new yet rightful master. His army thus swollen,

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<sup>1</sup> Khafi Khan p. 374.

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Sahu advanced to Ahmadnagar; this old town was the seat of Muhammedan authority for over two centuries and occupied a central position and to it Aurangzeb had repaired in the last year of his life. From here Sahu paid his respects to the remains of that venerable figure buried at Khuldabad and communicated his arrival to his aunt Tarabai who was ruling as regent at Satara on behalf of her infant son Sivaji, eleven years of age.

### **Sahu's struggle with Tarabai.**

Sahu having informed the ruling party at Satara on his return, invited from them proposals for the future government of the Maratha State. The Regent Tarabai was a woman of imperious temperament and the prospect of resigning the reins of administration to her nephew and accept a subordinate position was distasteful to that masterful lady. She refused to believe the reports of Sahu's release, discredited his letters and declaring the new claimant for the *Gadi* to be an imposter, ordered her generals to destroy wherever they should find him. This ruse could not stand for long; Sahu was personally known to the leading Maratha chieftains and officers who had come in contact with him. As a proof of greater conviction Parsoji Bhosle publicly dined with him. Tarabai then put forth another and a stronger reason why she was not prepared to admit Sahu to government. She argued, 'that the Maratha kingdom had been reared up with painful toil by the Great Sivaji. This was lost by Sambhaji, Sahu's father and her husband Rajaram raised the edifice anew out of ashes. He defended it against the Moghals' onslaught and hurled them back. The present Maratha State, she contended, was her husband's creation. She also argued that the Maratha State. The Regent Tarabai was a woman of imperious Great Sivaji had expressed a wish on his death-bed that the succession should go to his second son Rajaram, the elder Sambhaji being Unfit to rule. Sahu thus in no way could lay any claim to the *Gadi*.<sup>1</sup>

Tarabai's specious arguments could make little impression on the Marathas, always jealous of the right of the elder or the senior branch to which Sahu belonged. They had fought all these years to liberate their homeland and obtain the release of their legitimate Prince Sahu, to whose freedom and reinstatement they looked forward as the natural culmination of that struggle. The sacrifices the nation had made, were not to uphold the cause of Rajaram or his son, but to save the honour of the House of Sivaji of which Sahu of the senior branch was the living symbol, and whose return had great significance to them. Even Rajaram at the time of ascending *Gadi* in 1690, had declared that he was holding the office of *Chatrapati* (the king) only in trust for his nephew then absent in the Moghal camp and that he would be only too happy to make way for the rightful owner. The issue had always been presented to the people of Maharashtra as the restoration of the senior branch

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<sup>1</sup> Letter published in *Vividh Dnyan Vistar*, 1924 February.



to its rightful authority and Tarabais quibbles regarding the superior claims of her son deceived nobody. Herein lay Sanu's advantage. The common people and soldiers were solidly on his side. It was ultimately this support of the common people that sustained his cause and helped him triumph over odds. Though commanded by the queen to swear fidelity to her son on milk and boiled rice, Tarabai's officers did so with a reservation that their first loyalty would be to support the cause of legitimacy and uphold the dignity of the house of Sivaji.

Sahu advanced to Khed on the Bhima; his further prospects depended on the attitude of the great Maratha captains and especially on Senapati Dhanaji Jadhav who commanded the largest Maratha army in the field. Dhanaji knew young Sahu personally and was convinced of his superior claims to Maratha leadership by his *Diwan* Balaji Visvanath and Khando Ballal, the *Chatrapati's* hereditary Secretary. The old soldier refused to take arms against his lawful sovereign and carried with him the major part of the army. The remnant was too small to make a stand against the combined forces and fled to Satara (Battle of Khed, 12th October).

Important consequences flowed from the battle of Khed. It opened to Sahu the gates of the Maratha Svaraj, the heart of the hilly country of Poona and Satara, where the great Sivaji had begun his wonderful career and which he took care to fence round with formidable fortresses. The powerful forces led by *Senapati* Dhanaji had declared in his favour; Sahu decided to press home his advantage. He marched on to the capital occupying on his way Jejuri, Sirval and Candan Vandan. The *Saciv* of Bhore Sankaraji Narayan held some of the important hill forts in the region; he was summoned by the young Prince and assured of royal favour. Torn between his personal loyalty to the queen and his higher duty to his nation and the cause of legitimacy, the old veteran decided the issue by putting an end to his life<sup>1</sup> (27th October 1707). Sahu sent message of sympathy to the bereaved family and by his conciliatory conduct made an excellent impression on his compatriots and obtained the hill forts of Rajgad, Torna, Rohida, Vicitragad without striking a blow. His rear thus secured, he was free to commence the siege of the capital. Tarabai had fled to Panhala with her son and her *Amatya*, Ramcandra, leaving the defence of Satara to Parasuram *Pratinidhi*. The garrison and the commandant had no heart to fight their own brethren. By seizing the commandant's family at Wai Sahu forced him to open the gates of the city. It was a Saturday in January 1708 that the victorious entry was made; and the memory of the happy event was greeted by the custom of beating of drums on Saturdays at the fort.

<sup>1</sup>Itihas Sangraha, Volume XI. *Pesva Daftarantil Mahiti*, PP. 188-189.

After a week's time Sahu ascended the *Gadi* in ceremony<sup>1</sup> and appointed his new ministers. Anxious to conciliate old families he made few changes and made them where absolutely necessary.

### **His coronation and new appointments and pursuit of Tarabai.**

The post of *Pesva* went to a son of Moropant Pingle, Dhanaji Jadhav was confirmed as *Senapati* and the right of making collections in several districts was delegated to him. At this period of confusion (as remarked by Grant Duff) the revenue was realized on no fixed principle but levied as opportunity presented itself in the manner of contribution. The infant son of Sankaraji Narayan was likewise confirmed as *Saciv*; Gangadhar Pralhad Niraji was elevated to the post of *Pratinidhi* as Parasuram Pant *Pratinidhi* refused to abjure his oath to Tarabai. The Citnis family was continued in its office. Dhanaji's *Divan*, Balaji Visvanath, who had materially helped the Prince's cause, was taken in direct service of the King, appointed *Mutaliq* or Deputy to the *Amatya* and was honoured with the dignity of ' *Sena-Karta*', probably in appreciation of his skill in raising new contingents and furnishing them properly. The great Maratha Captains, Nemaji Sinde, Parsoji Bhosle, Haibat Rav Nimbalkar and a host of others received high sounding titles and dresses as the sovereign had little else to confer on the powerful chieftains.

But Sahu was not yet out of the wood. His aunt had fled before him to Panhala and from there was busy fomenting discord among Maratha ranks and sowing disunity among Maratha chiefs. Many Maratha leaders like Ghorpades, Cavans, Dabhades, Thorats, had risen to greatness in her husband's service ; the great house of Santaji Ghorpade was the rival of Dhanaji Jadhav and competed with the Jadhav family for the honours of the generalship. Ramcandra *Amatya* and the queen who had directed the defence of Maharashtra for over a long period, from Panhala, claimed personal devotion from not a few commandants of forts in the Ghat region. Sahu therefore had to follow Tarabai to the hills. He offered to cede to his cousin territory south of the Varna to put an end to the internecine strife. Tarabai refused the concession. How could she accept this small consolation when she wanted the sovereignty of the entire Maratha State for her son ? The offer was spurned and the struggle went on for quite a while; Sahu's forces occupied Kolhapur and invested Panhala; Tarabai abandoned it for Rangna, and feeling insecure there moved to Malvan. Panhala was occupied by Sahu's forces: he attempted to storm Rangna, but failed and returned to the capital to spend the monsoon (1708 June).

<sup>1</sup> The dates given by Sardesai of the capture of Satara by Sahu and of his coronation and followed by later writers lack authority. Sardesai takes these from *Sedganvkar Bakhar* and in looking up the calendar makes a slight mistake. If Satara was captured on a Saturday, that day cannot be 1st January of 1708 as given by Sardesai, which according to the calendar was a Thursday. Then the Sarvadhari Hindu year given in *Sedganvkar Bakhar* accords with 1709 and not with 1708.

### Failure of Negotiations with Bahadur Sah.

It was not possible for Sahu to resume the offensive against Tarabai after the close of the monsoon. The new Moghal emperor Bahadur Sah had been called to the south by the assumption of authority by his brother Kam Baks. Bahadur arrived in the Deccan in January 1709 and called upon Sahu to aid him, sent a general call to the Deccan chiefs to lend him support in suppressing the revolt. Sahu's relations with the Moghal authorities were of a nebulous kind; vague promises had been held out to him, but no definite agreement concluded, no *firman* granted. Sahu despatched an envoy to the Emperor's presence to obtain the *firman* of *Svaraj*, *Cauth* and *Sardesmukhi*, while a strong force under Candrasen Jadhav hovered in Khandes to back up his request. By Zulfiqar Khan's representations Bahadur Sah was inclined to favour Sahu's cause; but Tarabai (about this time) sent counter proposals saying that her son was the lawful sovereign of the Maratha State and offered to accept much lower terms. The enemy's game of throwing an apple of discord amongst the Marathas succeeded. Bahadur Sah refused recognition to either party asking them first to settle between themselves as to whom he should deliver the goods. He retired to Hindustan in the summer of 1709; Moghal goodwill was one of Sahu's assets, its hollow nature was now exposed publicly. The Maratha prince if he was to rule his kingdom in the plenitude of his grandfather's powers, must do it on his own. The failure of his mission to the Emperor thus revived the embers of the civil war which before this were flickering out.

The suspense in which things were left by the retiring Emperor stiffened the attitude of some of the local officials. Lodi Khan of Cakan had become quite an eye-sore to Marathas by his depredations in the Poona district as far south as Purandar. He now showed the audacity of blocking up the path of the Maratha force retiring from Khandes through the Junnar pass ; he was defeated and killed, his assistant Karim Beg of Junnar was taken prisoner. At the same time Tanaji Jagtap, Yasin Khan, the Siddi of Janjira and several others became restive and started trouble in Maratha territory. However, so long as Daud Khan, a nominee of the friendly Zulfiqar Khan, continued as Deputy Governor, there was for Sahu no fear of general opposition to the establishment of his authority. But it was obvious that the most he could expect from this quarter, was neutrality and not active help in his cause.

The second prop that gave way about this time was the loss of Sahu's *Senapati*. About this time died Dhanaji Jadhav<sup>1</sup> (1708 August). His army had materially contributed to the early successes of Sahu. The great Maratha soldier died at Vadganv on the Varna

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<sup>1</sup> *Itihas Sangraha, Pesva Daftarantil Mahiti*, p. 12 *Rajwade* Vol. 21, No. 94.

from the effects of one of his old wounds. His son Candrasen inherited the father's army, but not the old tradition in which his father had been reared.

Sahu's third prop disappeared when Parsoji Bhosle died in 1710. Parsoji was one of the few great chiefs to declare themselves early in Sahu's favour. He was of the same house as the Prince and had been able to carry with him a number of chieftains in Khandes.

The situation demanded of Sahu quick decision, high organizing capacity, and daring and swift action of a skilful general which by rapid successes would overwhelm his opponents, and rally to his standard not only the common peasantry who believed in the righteousness of his cause, but the waverers and trimmers who were but too anxious to throw in their lot with the winning party. Unfortunately young Sahu though full of personal courage, lacked initiative and vision and was altogether bereft of qualities of military leadership. All his youth he had passed as a prisoner in the Moghal seraglio and had no opportunity to cultivate habits of active life, no chance to obtain administrative experience, to learn military tactics and planning, and neither had he that iron discipline so essential for a successful soldier in those rough times when the king was primarily a military leader before anything else. A great landslide began round Sahu.

### **Candrasen's Revolt.**

Tarabai's partisans who had lain quiescent in the first rush of Sahu's victory now came out in the open. Hindu Rav Ghorpade joined Hamid Khan and opposed collection by Sahu's officers near Bijapur (14th November 1709). In March 1710 Hamid Khan surrounded Jadhav near Burhanpur. Before the end of the year (1710) Tarabai's intrigues began to bear fruit. Rambhaji Nimbalkar walked over to the Moghal camp and accepted service as *Faujdar* of Ahmadnagar. The air was thick with whisperings of a wide-spread conspiracy<sup>1</sup>. The blow descended in the form of the revolt of the King's *Senapati*, Candrasen Jadhav.

Candrasen was in a peculiar position about 1710. At the head of one of the largest forces in Maharashtra he was being courted by Tarabai on the one hand and by the Moghal Subhedar on the other. Young Candrasen's head was swollen with his importance; he had little regard for the monarch whose resources were of a very meagre kind, who looked to his chieftains to do for him the hard work of fighting and who refused to share his confidence with the youthful commander. Candrasen lent a willing ear to Tarabai's overtures. A conspiracy was formed under his leadership. Prominent Maratha chieftains, the Thorats, Sahaji Nimbalkar, Dabhade were to join under Candrasen, march against Satara and oust Sahu in favour of Tarabai's son. These secret negotiations perhaps did not pass quite

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<sup>1</sup> Jaipur Akhbars Mss.

unnoticed. Sahu had invited the chiefs to Satara in October 1710 and when Candrasen moved out in the next campaigning season Balaji Visvanath was sent after him to watch his steps. Already jealous of the great influence Balaji Visvanath had obtained over his father as his *Divan*, the latter's elevation in the King's council had done nothing to abate that jealousy. Early in 1711 Candrasen's force was foraging round Baramati with Balaji trailing behind him as a revenue official of the king. There was no love lost between the two and a petty dispute between the followers of Candrasen and Balaji was taken up by the principals. Candrasen attacked Balaji, dispersed his force and sent the latter flying to the King. To the King's protest against the outrage, the *Senapati* sent a minatory reply that Balaji should surrender to him or he would no longer consider himself bound to the sovereign by his oath of fealty. Such an open defiance of authority Sahu would not tolerate. He ordered his *Sarlaskar*, Haibat Rav, to hold up the rebel's advancing columns and sent him reinforcements. Candrasen was defeated in two battles near the Adarki pass and Salpa pass (Phaltan Taluka) and turned back to join Daud Khan near Bahadur Gad. His later movements till he was befriended by *Nizam-ul-Mulk* in 1713 are uncertain, if he joined Tarabai he seems to have achieved precious little <sup>1</sup>.

Candrasen's revolt was a sign for a general rising all round. Tarabai's followers Ghatge, Ghorpade, Cavan took up arms, occupied Vadganv, Kumtha, Sirala, Karhad and other places and threatened to advance on Satara. Candrasen with the aid of the Moghal officers began raising fresh troops to renew the contest. Even much nearer Sahu's authority came to count for nothing. The petty *Inamdar* of Khatav, Krsnarav, proclaimed his independence. Damaji Thorat another dependent of Tarabai at Patas Hinganganv (Poona) turned out the King's officers. Parasuram Pant who some time back had made a show of being reconciled to the new regime, had been granted the dignity of *Pratinidhi* and rewarded with the Visalgad jagir. His son in possession of the *jagir*, now declared for Tarabai. Sahu suspected the father to have instigated the treachery and losing his usual equanimity of temper ordered the *jagir* to be confiscated and the old *Pratinidhi* to be blinded. The execution of the extreme penalty was stayed by the intercession of Khando Ballal Citnis, but; Parasuram was thrown into jail once more <sup>2</sup>.

The most serious danger to Sahu's State, however, came from Konkan. Here the powerful Angre on Tarabai's orders drove Sahu's garrisons out of the Konkan forts of Rajmaci, Tung Tikona, Ghangad, occupied Lohgad, seized his *Pesva* Bahiropan Pingle and threatened to march on Poona.

<sup>1</sup>*Attahasik Patravayavahar*, pp. 5-8, Sahu *Bakhar* and *Selections from pesva Daftar*, Volume VII, 13.

<sup>2</sup>*Sahu Roznisi*, p. 55.



The skies were falling round Sahu. Though he had tried hard to conciliate the leading members of the old nobility they had with few exceptions refused to respond to his call and work with him whole-heartedly. On slight pretences they were changing sides and thwarting his plans for the settlements of the country. The *Senapati* was in arms against him ; his *Pesva* had shown himself altogether devoid of initiative or capacity, the *Pratinidhi* was wavering in his loyalty and the *Sarkhel* after capturing the *Pesva*, threatened to march on the capital; Dabhade, Ghatge and Thorat were all either sitting on the fence or actively taking part in fanning the civil war. The only party that stood to gain by this internecine struggle was the Moghal Subhedar of the Deccan. The Deccan governorship had in the meanwhile changed hands, and in the place of the friendly Zulfiqar and his nominee Daud Khan, brought on the scene *Nizam-ul-Mulk* a man of different metal, who meant to follow a different line of action towards the Marathas.

#### *Rise of Balaji Visvanath.*

His intimate friends and Councillors, foremost among whom were Khando Ballal *Citnis* and Balaji Visvanath Bhat, advised the King an immediate change of policy. The lesser nobility and the common masses believed in the righteousness of Sahu's cause as being the senior member of Sivaji's house and therefore the lawful and hereditary heir to the Maratha throne, had been greatly impressed by his loving, god-fearing saintly disposition and were therefore solidly behind the new king. What was necessary was to organize this general good-will in the king's behalf and to assure the warring nobility that the new position they had acquired in the changed circumstances would be duly recognised and maintained. For the time being at least, there was no going back to Sivaji's days and Sivaji's constitution of centralised monarchy.

Sahu being at his wits' end called upon Balaji Visvanath to shoulder the responsibility and carry out the policy he advocated. Balaji was not an altogether unknown figure in politics. His forefathers were hereditary *Desmukhs* or revenue collectors of Mahal Danda Rajpuri and Srivardhan in Konkan about fifty miles south of Bombay. The family had left Konkan and migrated to Des country owing to troubles with the Siddi rulers of Janjira. Balaji's native cleverness, his experience as revenue officer and pleasant manners brought him employment immediately and secured his advancement in the Maratha country. He worked as Subhedar (administrator and revenue collector) in Poona and Aurangabad districts in Rajaram's time, and thus became familiar with the currents and cross currents of Moghal Maratha politics and the leading personalities in both the camps. Since Sahu's return to Deccan he had faithfully followed his fortunes and had shown great organizing capacity and skill as a mediator. It was his advocacy that had brought to Sahu's cause the veteran leader Dhanaji Jadhav in 1707 and secured him his ancestral throne. Again in 1711 by his activity, watchfulness and tact he had foiled Candrasen's conspiracy and defeated Sahu's rivals.

By defeating Krsnarav Khatavkar he had taught a stem lesson to rebels. Sahu felt Balaji was the only man whom he could trust to save his affairs and bring order out of chaos. On 17th November 1713 he appointed him his *Pesva* or Prime Minister, gave him a fresh *jagir* of six *Mahals* and two forts to meet the expenses of his troops and asked him to proceed against Kanhoji Angre <sup>1</sup>.

*Kanhoji Angre, conciliated.*

The threat from the Angres was quite a formidable one. Kanhoji Angre was brave and active and had risen to the admiralty (1698) by personal prowess. He had attracted to his service some of the most daring souls of all nationalities. His ships scoured the western waters and brought him treasure that was reported to be fabulous. His name had become a veritable terror to his neighbours, the Siddi, the English, the Dutch and the Portuguese. To contend with the *Sarkhel* looked quite a perilous task, but Sahu's new *Pesva* showed himself quite the master of the situation. In dealing with Kanhoji Angre he decided to rely more on his powers of persuasion and diplomatic skill than on force. His personal friendship with that great chief in his former days proved a great asset to him. Marching towards Konkan at the head of about 4000 troops he invited the great Angre to a personal meeting, and told him that a great future awaited their country provided they closed their ranks and did not fight among themselves. "Your father Tukoji" he told Angre, "was raised to his high position by the great Sivaji. Is it right that you, his son should so far forget your loyalty to the senior branch of Sivaji's house that you should overrun Sahu's kingdom and seize his minister? This is outright treachery. If you feel you have given your word of honour to the Queen, go and stay with her in peace. Why disturb our provinces? The best course for you, when the junior branch was defeated, was to acknowledge your mistake, reaffirm your allegiance and win Sahu's favour. There is no third alternative for a subordinate chieftain. I have been asked to fight you and recover the territories you have seized. Remember you are surrounded by enemies who would be too glad to attack you at the first opportunity. Once hostilities start, it may be difficult to obtain royal pardon." The great Angre was a shrewd man, knew the strength as well as the weakness of his position. Balaji's friendship secured his land frontier and promised him support in dealing with his enemies. Perhaps about this time Tarabai's power at Kolhapur was eclipsed and she herself thrown in prison<sup>2</sup> Kanhoji felt he was no longer bound by his oath to the Queen, and Sambhaji (the successor to Tarabai's son) had nothing alluring about him nor showed promise of repeating the glories of his father or grand-father. Kanhoji entered into Balaji's proposals and accepted his offer. 'On being confirmed in command of the fleet, his territory

<sup>1</sup> Sahu Roznisi p. 45-56, *Itihas Sangrah*, *Pesva Daftarantil Mahiti*, pp. 13, 122-124, *Rajwade Volume 4* pp. 32-37, *Selections from Pesva Daftar* Volume VII Nos. 1, 2 & 40, *Tritiya Sammelan Vrtta*, pp. 85-91, 149-152.

<sup>2</sup> *Bharat Itihas Samsodhak Mandals Quarterly*, Volume XXVIII, p. 78.

in Konkan and his title of *Sarkhel*, he agreed to renounce Sambhaji, to release the *Pesva*, to restore all his conquests except Rajmaci and maintain the cause of Sahu<sup>1</sup>.

This agreement which was soon ratified at Satara was a great triumph for Balaji Visvanath's diplomacy. It won over to Sahu's cause, without bloodshed, the most powerful chieftain from Tarabai's party and established his power on firm foundations. The new policy enunciated by the *Pesva* in dealing with the Angre chief, carried assurances of security to other chieftains who willingly came forth with declarations of loyalty.

About this time Tarabai, the source of all this trouble, lost her power in Kolhapur and was thrown in confinement.

### *Nizam in the Deccan.*

It was none too early that Sahu secured peace on the home front. The several revolutions at Delhi had removed from the scene his old friends and brought in new personalities and developed a new situation. Imperial authority was on the decline and the empire was showing signs of dissolution. The friendly Zulfikar Khan was no more, his place at Delhi having been taken by the Sayyad brothers Abdullah and Husain Ali. They appointed to the Deccan governorship *Nizam-ul-Mulk* who had different ideas about the policy to be pursued towards the Marathas.

The Deccan had peculiar fascination for the *Nizam*. Having spent his early career in the south in the Emperor's campaigns, the *Nizam* had obtained an intimate knowledge of the province, its people and its problems. Separated by a long distance from the heart of the empire, the southern province offered great possibilities to an ambitious man in the declining days of the empire and the *Nizam* was not one to miss them. The only effective opposition to the establishment of his independent authority in the Deccan came from the Marathas; they were his rivals in the field. To check their rising power and keep it in effective bounds became the watch-word of his policy.

This advocate of a strong policy towards the Marathas arrived in the Deccan in June 1713. He found his charge in a strange condition. The local representative of his predecessor, Daud Khan Panni, had conceded to the Marathas the rights of collecting *Cauth* which Bahadur Sah had refused in 1709; Maratha agents had established a kind of parallel government and were everywhere active collecting their tribute direct from the ryots. No merchandise could pass without paying their toll. A Maratha chief Nemaji Sinde had been taken in Moghal service and held charge of Aurangabad division which enabled him to extend his influence right up to Malva and Central India. The very existence of Moghal authority in the south was at stake.

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<sup>1</sup> *Sahu Maharaj Vance Caritra*, p. 40, *Rajwade Volume II*, pp. 23-25 ; *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads* edited by Mawji and Parasnis, pp. 197-199.

The *Nizam* immediately set himself to put the house in order. He repudiated the convention entered into by his predecessors and turned out the Maratha officers from their military posts from his territory. The Bhima Godavari basin became the battle-ground where the two powers impinged on each other. Here the *Nizam* sent a strong force to drive away the advanced posts of the enemy. At the same time he decided to take advantage of the dissensions in the Maratha court, invited to his service the traitor Candrasen Jadhav from Kolhapur and through him opened negotiations with the Kolhapur party.

To counteract the *Nizam's* activities the new *Pesva* took the field immediately on his return from the Konkan. A number of indecisive engagements took place; in one such Haibat Rav Nimbalkar was killed at Canda; in another the *Nizam* claimed to have defeated the *Pesva* near Purandar; in yet another the Moghal *Bakhsi* and *Vaqainigar* of Baglana Muhammad Ibrahim Tabrizi was lured into an ambuscade and killed by Khanderav Dabhade while convoying a caravan from Surat to Aurangabad, The *Pesva* also instigated several risings within the *Subhedar's* territory with the help of the Maratha officials who had entrenched themselves in Moghal districts<sup>1</sup>.

While the *Nizam* was trying to grapple with the Marthas in the Deccan, his enemies at Delhi gave him no rest. They appointed as his *Divan* Haidar Quli Khan who affected to act independently of the *Subhedar*. This enraged the *Nizam* who removed him from service and sent him back to Delhi. While he was contending with enemies outside and within, he was recalled to Delhi, his place being taken by Sayyad Husain Ali (1715 May).

#### *Agreement with Husain Ali.*

The *Nizam's* transfer from the southern scene did not bring on an immediate improvement in the situation. His successor Sayyad Hussain Ali for a time tried to follow the *Nizam's* strong policy towards the Marathas. One of their chiefs Khanderav Dabhade had established himself in Khandes and levied fee on all merchandise passing from Surat to Burhanpur and Aurangabad. The Moghal Viceroy despatched a strong force of ten thousand under his *Bakhsi* Zulfiqar Beg to bring Dabhade to book and clear up the road. The Beg's column pursuing the enemy dispersed into the hills, when it was surrounded and cut-up to a man. 'Not one bullock, camel or horse belonging to that army was saved'.

Husain Ali retaliated by sending yet another and a stronger expedition under his *Divan* Muhkam Singh accompanied by his brother; Saifud-din Khan and Candrasen Jadhav. Dabhade skillfully retired before the enemy fighting rear-guard actions. A major engagement took place near Ahmadnagar. The Maratha troops succeeded in breaking out and crossing the Bhima. Sweeping aside the enemy's

<sup>1</sup> Khafi Khan, pp. 450-51.



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light cavalry that was harassing his flanks and rear, Muhkam Singh pressed towards Satara in the hope of coming against the main army. Dabhade bided his time and went to Raja Sahu who had moved to Satara fort. The Maratha garrisons which were posted in various places, held their ground. Whenever the Moghal army approached, the Maratha force dispersed, and as soon as it departed they returned and occupied their positions. Against such a wary enemy the Moghal force could make little impression. Muhkam Singh and Jadhav retired the way they had advanced<sup>1</sup>. (Dec. 1716 Jan. 1717).

Husain Ali's discomfiture against Khanderao Dabhade was learnt by Emperor Farrukh Siyar with evident satisfaction. Farrukh Siyar was a strange admixture of bravado and cowardice; he owed his elevation to the two Sayyad brothers yet had not the wisdom to surrender himself completely to their advice. He was jealous of the great powers wielded by them, plotted against them practically from the first day of his accession and wrote to his distant governors and feudatories to make war on them to bring about their ruin. Among others Sahu and several Maratha chieftains received those royal *farmans* with which they complied most readily. Bands of horsemen overran imperial districts in the Deccan reducing everything to utter chaos.

Distracted by Maratha attacks on one side and court intrigues on the other, Husain Ali had recourse to negotiations with Sahu. To this course he was advised by Sankaraji Malhar, a former Minister of Rajaram, now in the confidence of the Sayyad. The *Subhedar* deputed Sankaraji Malhar, to Sahu's court to find out a basis for peace. The Maratha viewpoint in the discussions was set forth by Pesva Balaji Visvanath.

Some kind of formal agreement between the two powers was long overdue. Aurangzeb had not been able to make up his mind on what terms to purchase peace. Azam held out vague promises which both parties were interpreting differently. Bahadur Sah evaded the issue asking Sahu to settle first the question of succession with his rival of the Kolhapur party. Though the highest authorities were thus balking the issues on some pretext or other, the ground was slipping under the feet of their local representatives. No longer able to hold their own against growing Maratha pressure, they very conveniently sought accommodation with Maratha chieftains as best as they could. This indefinite state of affairs only served to increase the general anarchy and profited none of principals. The Marathas were extending their depredations to Gujarat and Malva. Bold and intrepid spirits raised levies and began to make collections on their own. Partisans of Sambhaji were overrunning the Karnatak Subha of Bijapur. No wonder both parties were keen on a settlement.

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<sup>1</sup> Selections from Pesva *Daftar* XXX. pp. 235-240. Khafi Khan, pp. 464-465.



Balaji Visvanath in the name of his master asked the right of raising *Cauth* throughout the six provinces of the Deccan—(Aurangabad, Berar, Khandes, Bidar, Hyderabad and Bijapur, which included the whole of Karnatak including the tributary states of Mysore, Trichinopoly and Tanjore) to be granted. He argued that the Marathas over two decade were levying contributions over the Deccan provinces of the Moghals and this fact should now be formally recognised by an imperial grant. He also demanded *Cauth* of Malwa and Gujarat which Maratha horse had invaded. He demanded likewise the right of raising an additional impost of ten per cent, for the Raja as *Sardes mukhi* or head of the landed gentry. The old conquest of Sivaji in Maharastra *Svaraj* were to be completely restored, the *Subhedar* to issue orders for the release of such forts and districts as still continued under Moghal occupation. Sivneri (Sivneri fort) Sivaji's birth place, was required to be given up, as also the fort of Trimbak in Nasik district. Conquests lately made by Parsoji Bhosle in Berar and Gondvan were to be confirmed. The old Bijapur districts in Karnatak were demanded in the name of Fateh Singh Bhosle. The mother and the family of Sahu detained at Delhi were likewise to be set free and restored to the *Raja*.

On his side for the grant of *Cauth* the Pesva on behalf of his master, promised to maintain 15,000 troops with the *Subhedar* to aid the Emperor ; for the hereditary right of *Sardes mukhi* he agreed to pay the usual fee of 6.51 per cent. of the annual income from that source and bound himself to keep law and order in the country and suppress banditry; for the *Svaraj* or old territory the *Raja* agreed to pay a tribute of ten lakhs of rupees every year. It was a condition of all these grants that the Raja would be faithful to the imperial throne and serve it loyally<sup>1</sup>.

The choice of the envoy had evinced the *Subhedars* anxiety to come to an understanding with the Marathas. The proposals worked out by his envoy were immediately accepted with the exception of claims on Gujarat and Malwa. Husain Ali delivered a sanad containing the articles of peace under his seal to the *vakil* of *Raja* Sahu and made no delay in writing for a royal firman confirming the agreement. He introduced the agents of Raja Sahu everywhere and orders went round for restoring *Svaraj* territory to the *Raja's* officials<sup>2</sup>.

The importance of the treaty was not lost upon the Emperor. Complete abdication of imperial authority in the Deccan which it involved and at the same time strengthening the hands of his tormentors, he could not tolerate. He refused to ratify the agreement and prepared for war. He called to his aid Sarbuland Khan from Patna, Nizam-ul-mulk from Moradabad and Ajit Singh from Gujarat.

<sup>1</sup> *Thorle Sahu Maharajance Caritra*, pp. 50-55, *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads* selected by Wad and edited by Parasnis and Mawji.

<sup>2</sup> Khafi Khan, p. 468.

They arrived in the capital but found they had neither the Emperor's confidence nor authority to act and wisely made their peace with the Sayyads. The Sayyad brothers informed of the monarch's intrigues, prepared to strike. Husain Ali marched to the capital with his Maratha allies and arrived in Delhi in February 1719. The brothers surrounded the palace with their troops, entered the palace, and seized the Emperor's person after some altercation. The hapless monarch was thrown in confinement and power passing into the hands of the Sayyads. The treaty entered into between Raja Sahu and Husain Ali Khan was ratified and firmans confirming the arrangements for *Cauth*, *Sardesmukhi* and *Svaraj* were issued on 13th and 24th March respectively. Balaji Visvanath who had accompanied the *Amir-ul-Umara* to the capital returned to the Deccan in May 1719 with the deeds and the *Rajas* family.

A right royal welcome awaited the minister at Satara. He had at last obtained recognition of the claims round which the Moghal-Maratha struggle had centred over two decades. The treaty marked a triumph for *Raja Sahu*. His recognition by the Moghal authority gave him a distinct advantage over his rival *Sambhaji* and made other Maratha chieftains look up to him as the fountain of authority. The Moghal rulers accepted the *fait accompli* and recognised the supremacy of Maratha interests in the south by granting them the right of collecting revenue from the six provinces of the Deccan.

The treaty had been criticised variously by different writers. While some have hailed it as a great diplomatic triumph, others have questioned its moral basis; yet a third school of historians condemn the Minister for accepting Moghal suzerainty and perpetuating Muslim shackles. They contend that while *Sivaji* fought for an independent Maratha state his grand-son acting on the advice of his *Pesva* threw away the jewel of liberty accepting in exchange the badge of Moghal slavery. This is an extreme view and loses sight of the fact that in politics satisfactory solutions of vexed problems are often found in face-saving devices or fictions. To accept the fictions literally, to analyse them in a legalistic way without taking into account how they worked in actual practice is mere casuistry and evinces a frame of mind ill-becoming a dispassionate historian. A tributary state has no independent authority to make war or peace, has no claims on the sovereign. *Cauth* and *Sardesmukhi* over the six *Subhas* of the Deccan were granted to the Marathas who went on exploiting their advantage till they demanded tribute from the whole of the imperial domain. No man of commonsense would look on this relation as one of subordination to the Moghal Crown. The Marathas were realists and were satisfied with the direction of policy leaving ostentatious display to the effete successors of *Aurangzeb*.

Criticism can rather be levelled against the scheme for realising the claims through a number of agents instead of obtaining the revenues direct for the royal treasury and thereby putting central

authority on firm foundations. For, according to this scheme, the collections in Gujarat were assigned to the *Senapati*, those in Berar and Gondvan to the Bhosle of Nagpur, of the Satara region to the *Pratinidhi*, of the Mavals (Poona district) to the *Saciv*; to the *Pesva* was granted Khandes and Baglana and Central India for his activities ; the *Sarlaskar* obtained the basin of the Godavari and Fateh Singh Bhosle was expected to make the annual levy from the Karnatak. Konkan was left in the possession of Kanhoji Angre. It was of the essence of the scheme that the chieftains whose authority had been established in a particular area should be recognised as the immediate ruler or law-giver of the region, should administer it and appropriate its revenues towards the maintenance of his troops while he contributed a small share to the Royal Exchequer.

Balaji perceived that the revival of Maratha power in its old monarchical form was no longer possible, that it would be difficult to harness the nation's military resources to the common cause unless concessions were made to the great warlords who had won an important place for themselves. He made them subordinate allies or confederates of the Sovereign, granting them a free hand in administering their conquests, called from them no greater sacrifice than uniting on matters of common policy. The arrangement, however, left too much authority in the hands of these chiefs without providing for checks to call them to account. This was the beginning of the *Jagir* system or Confederacy of the Maratha States which was responsible for the speedy expansion of the Maratha power and its rapid dissolution. Historians point out that this granting of authority over territory instead salaries to the officers by Balaji Visvanath was a departure from the wise rule of Sivaji, but throw the blame on the master and not on the minister. They suggest that Balaji substituted for the autocracy of the sovereign the Maratha Confederacy because he saw that Sahu had not the commanding talents and energy which had made possible the great King's concentrated dominion'. But it has been made plain in these pages that it was the support of the common people, of the Maratha peasant and the Maratha *Siledar*, that enabled Balaji beat down the opposition of the great war-lords and wrest victory for his master. In his desire to conciliate the great barons Balaji Visvanath appears to have gone too far and compromised royal authority. In leaving large powers to them Balaji undoubtedly surrendered the gains of the battle after winning it.

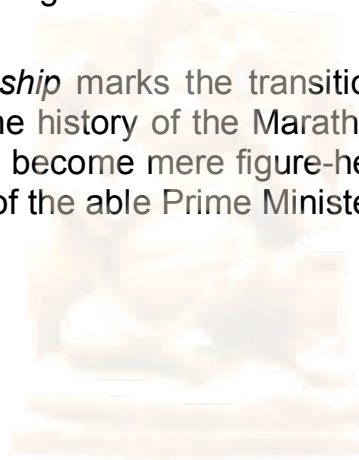
But it would be wrong to hold the *Pesva* responsible for the defects the system developed later. He accepted the situation and found in the *jagir* system the best solution possible to bring peace to the distracted country. He had seen the Maratha State wilting under fierce onslaughts of the Moghal and had also witnessed the tide slowly turning against the enemy. He grasped as few men of his generation did, the significance of the changes in the political atmos-

phere and was determined that his country should profit by them. His conciliatory approach enabled the great Maratha soldiers to come under the common flag and unite their skill and resources for common purposes. Playing cleverly on the rivalries and factions of the Moghal Court he wrested from them terms which secured for his state the gains of the bitter fighting of a quarter century and established the supremacy of Maratha interests in the Deccan.

Balaji Visvanath did not live long to work out his scheme in detail. After the monsoon he marched south and dispersed the Kolhapur force at Asta and laid siege to Kolhapur. After some desultory fighting he retired to Sasvad near Poona and died there on 2nd April 1720. He left behind his widow Radhabai, two sons, and three daughters. The eldest son who had been his companion in most of his campaigns in his later years succeeded him to the *Pesvaship*.

Balaji Visvanath has been truly called 'the second founder of the empire'. He piloted the ship of the State through dangerous waters and brought it to a safe haven. His greatness has been dimmed by the brilliant victories of his son and immediate successor to the *Pesvaship*. But it need not blind us to the fact that it was the father's statesmanship that brought order out of chaos, upheld national interests and preserved the unity of the state when it looked as if the Maratha people would once more sink into a number of petty principalities, making war upon each other and ending in submission to a foreign aggressor. The treaty with Husain Ali was a great diplomatic triumph which secured to the Maratha people the gains of their suffering of a quarter century and created a wide field for their restless ambition.

The term of Balaji's *Pesvaship* marks the transition from the royal period to the age of the *Pesvas*. It ushers a new era in the history of the Marathas. The feeble successors of the House of Sivaji fade into insignificance and become mere figure-heads with the passage of time. The reins of government pass into the hands of the able Prime Ministers, who direct the course of Maratha policy for the next century.



Maharashtra State Gazetteers





## CHAPTER 3\*

### EXPANSION OF MARATHA POWER (1720—1740)

**SHAHU.**

**Pesva Baji Rav I.**

BALAJIS ELDEST SON BAJI RAV SUCCEEDED HIM in the *Pesvaship* on 17th April 1720. The training and experience gained under his father's tutelage and the responsibility of office early matured the *Pesva's* character and gave him a poise and ample grasp of affairs. A much more vigorous personality, he quickened the pace of events. The energies of his people that were being wasted in petty disputes and Civil War he directed into fresh channels and carried Maratha arms into Hindustan. With a statesmanship of high order he combined military leadership suited to the genius of his people and under him the Marathas made rapid progress. During his father's life time he had seen enough of the Moghal *Darbar* to convince him of its weakness. The parties anxious to dominate at the court were bidding against each other for Maratha co-operation and the new *Pesva* was too shrewd not to perceive the advantage such a situation gave him. He realised early, as few of his contemporaries appear to have done, that the Moghal empire was rushing to its doom and that it was time for his people to march into Hindustan and seize supreme power instead of remaining confined to the narrow limits of their Deccan homeland. His early victories secured his position at home, increased his resources and confidence and in 1728 his armies burst into Central India. With Rajput help he secured a safe base in Malva for his plan of *Hindu-pad-Padsahi* which became the watch-word of Maratha policy and animated all Maratha activities in the years to follow.

Problems nearer home demanded the *Pesva's* first attention. He could not look northward before setting his own house in order. The great feudatories of the Maratha State owed but nominal allegiance to the sovereign, and enjoyed freedom of action that was undesirable. It was necessary that the Royal authority, if it was to be effective, should be strong enough to override that of its feudatories and bend them to its will. The security of the Maratha State was closely bound with its supremacy in the Deccan wrested from the Moghals after a bitter struggle of a quarter century. This had been unwillingly conceded in the treaty of March 1719

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\* This Chapter is contributed by Dr. V. G. Dighe.

concluded by the Sayyads and its preservation called for constant vigilance. The Sayyads had been driven from power and the very extensive Deccan Province encircling Maratha homeland on all sides except the west had been seized by Nizam-ul-mulk, the ablest among the Moghal chiefs and the most consistent opponent of the Maratha State. The Nizam was not likely to respect an agreement which cut at the root of his authority. A part of the *Svaraj* territory was yet in the hands of Moghal officials and foreign powers like the Siddi of Janjira, and Portuguese of Bassein and had to be wrested from them. The Civil War with the Kolhapur party was only in abeyance, the faction of Sambhaji refusing to accept a subordinate position. The situation was thus bristling with difficulties.

#### *Contest with Nizam-ul-mulk.*

The safety of the Maratha homeland was the key to the situation. This was always in peril till a satisfactory settlement was made with the Deccan *subhedar*. The Nizam had arrived in the Deccan in 1724 after his failure as *Vazir* at Delhi and meant to stay. Within a year he beat down all local opposition, obtained formal recognition of his titles and was free to oppose Maratha claims. But he knew that the Marathas were too strong to be attacked in their homeland and had not forgotten the lesson of Aurangzeb's fruitless campaigning against them. He proceeded very warily in his plans. He removed his capital from Aurangabad to Hyderabad, a place distant from Maratha territory and occupying a more convenient position for his province. By offering a *jagir* in Berar he persuaded Raja Sahu to exempt his new capital from *Cauth*. The *Pesva* protested in vain against the exchange as he saw that this was the thin end of the wedge to eliminate Maratha influence in the Hyderabad quarter. His protest was overruled by the Raja in the hope of establishing cordial relations with the Deccan *Subhedar*.

Sambhaji of Kolhapur now played into the hands of the Nizam. The Kolhapur Prince had refused to be reconciled to Sahu's superior authority and was now roused into hostility by the Nizam's blandishments and by activities of Sahu's armies in Karnatak. Two Maratha armies under Sahu's chiefs had swept southward as far as Srirangapatam in 1725 and 1726 and on this Sambhaji looked as encroachment on his rights. He made common cause with the Nizam on the promise that the latter would support his claims against Sahu. Anxious to embroil the Marathas in a civil war such a promise was readily forthcoming from the Navab.

The Nizam now affected ignorance of the respective claims of Sahu and Sambhaji, withheld payment of *Cauth* by dismissing Sahu's agents from his dominions and asked Sahu to submit his claims to be arbitrated. The proposed arbitration was a mere

cloak to conceal his design of reviving the old controversy over succession and once more embroiling the Marathas in their domestic dispute.

Sahu was dumb-founded at the Nizam's proposal. He had always been anxious to live in amity with the Moghal *Subhedar* and his friendly overtures had been rewarded with the challenge to his authority. The *Pratinidhi's* timid advice of accepting the proposal of arbitration was stoutly opposed by the *Pesva* and war was declared on the Nizam in August 1727.

Sambhaji of Kolhapur joined the Nizam and this the *Subhedar* felt would be the sign for the civil war to flare up. In a letter to Savai Jai Singh he unfolded his scheme. "With a view to carrying out the Emperor's order I have with God's help, called to my side *Raja* Sambhaji who is Sahu's rival, conciliated him and engaged in punishing and exterminating Sahu..... I am hopeful that other partisans of Sahu would desert him for my side and his party would cease to exist — according to our hearts' desire."<sup>1</sup> But the *Pesva's* genius and strategy defeated the Nizam's design. Orders for general mobilization were given on 1st August 1727. Forts were warned to be on the defensive and before the rains had stopped a large Maratha army consisting mainly of light cavalry took the field under command of the *Pesva* and entered the Aurangabad district. As the Maratha army was plundering Jalna the Nizam taking Sambhaji with him set out to punish the Marathas. On 6th November 1727 a skirmish took place and the *Pesva* avoiding a contest turned in the direction of Burhanpur. To save the wealthy city the Nizam hurried towards Burhanpur but failed to come up with the Marathas owing to his baggage and equipment. In the meanwhile the *Pesva* had entered Gujarat clearly with the intention of drawing the Nizam into the hilly country. His plan was to exhaust the enemy before attacking him in the field. The Nizam turning from the pursuit set his face towards Poona to destroy the place of the *Pesva's* abode. Taleganv, Narayanganv, Baramati all surrendered and the main army advanced as far as Poona. Learning that the *Pesva* had re-entered Vaijapur district along the Godavari the Nizam retraced his steps to cover his country. His army had been tired out by marching and countermarching and the Maratha allies on whom he had placed great reliance proved utterly worthless and lacking in daring. In the mountainous country near Palkhed in which he was marching, grain and forage could not be procured. The Moghal army was completely surrounded, attacked on 25th February and forced to seek terms. On 6th March 1728 was concluded the treaty of Mungi-Sevganv. The *Navab* granted recognition of Sahu as the sole king of the Marathas and promised to abandon the cause of Sambhaji. He also agreed not to oppose Sahu's claims of *Cauth* and *Sardesmukhi*

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<sup>1</sup> Mss. letter, Sir Jadunath Sarkar's Collection.

over the six *Subhas* of the Decean. The Nizam's attempt to sow dissensions and involve the Maratha State in a Civil War was decisively defeated by the *Pesva* and Maratha supremacy over the Decean was firmly established <sup>1</sup>.

Abandoned by the Nizam it was easy to bring to book Sambhaji of Kolhapur. Incited secretly by the *Navab's* agents and Udaji Cavan he again declared war on Sahu in January 1730. He was surprised in his camp on the Varna and his camp equipage and his family fell into Sahu's hands. Sambhaji threw himself on the mercy of his cousin. Sahu anxious to wipe out bitter feelings invited Sambhaji to a personal meeting, and after much feasting and amidst scenes of splendour was concluded in April 1731 the treaty of Varna which defined the relations of the Kolhapur Prince with the Maratha State. Sambhaji was confirmed in the sovereignty of the territory held by him, he was also to occupy forts and posts upto Tungabhadra and his position was recognised as that of a subordinate ally of the Satara *Raja*. The agreement put an end to a long standing feud <sup>2</sup>.

#### *Defeat of Senapati Dabhade.*

Another domestic dispute convulsed the young Maratha State at this period. It was the revolt of *Senapati* Dabhade. The province of Gujarat had been marked out as the sphere of operations for the *Senapati* and for over two decades his subordinates were exploiting the region. Pilaji Gaikvad and Kanthaji Kadam Bande among them had by 1725 broken down the imperial rule and secured the *Cauth* of Gujarat.

From 1726 the *Pesva's* troops began invading the province. Sarbu-land Khan, the Governor of Gujarat concluded a treaty with the *Pesva* in February 1727 granting him *Cauth* and *Sardes mukhi* of the province on condition that the latter would take it upon himself to expel other disturbers of peace, a clause mainly directed against Pilaji Gaikvad and Bande. These two chiefs defeated and drove out Udaji Pavar from Gujarat who had invaded on behalf of the *Pesva*. But in 1729 December a large army of that *Pesva* under his brother Cimaji marched into Gujarat, expelled Bande and Gaikvad sacked Petlad, Dholka and other rich towns of Gujarat and forced the Moghal Governor to renew the agreement of *Cauth* concluded by him two years back and pay the revenues of Gujarat to the *Pesva* or his agents <sup>3</sup>.

The agreement was clearly an infringement of the *Senapati's* claims over Gujarat. The *Pesva* appeared to be claiming a superior authority over other chiefs and subordinate them to his dictation. This was

<sup>1</sup> Main authorities are *Thorle Sahu Maharat Yance Caritra* by Chitnis and *Hadiqat-ul-alam* by Mir Alam ; also S. P. D. IX, XXII and XXX.

<sup>2</sup> *Kavyetihās Sangraha Patren Yadi*, 1930 Ed., Nos. 1820

<sup>3</sup> *Kavyetihās Sangraha Patren Yadi*, 1930 Ed., Nos. 1820. a S. P. D. Vol. XV, pp. 82-85, *Sahu's Roznisi* 105.

resented by the *Sendpati* and by all those whose interests the new agreement affected. The *Senapati* became a centre of revolt and round him gathered the disaffected elements- Pilaji Gaikvad, Kanthaji Kadam Bande, Udaji Pavar, Kanhoji Bhosle and others. The party counted on being supported at Court by the *Pratinidhi*

At this stage of the dispute the *Senapati* committed a tactical blunder that lost him sympathy and support of the Court and placed him in the position of a renegade against constituted authority. Apprehending that he may not get justice from the monarch he entered into secret negotiations with the Nizam to invoke his aid. The Nizam readily welcomed the opportunity of weakening his opponents, sent encouraging replies to the *Senapati* and assumed a threatening tone towards the *Pesva's* agents <sup>1</sup>.

The report of these intrigues reached the *Pesva*. Before the disaffected elements could formulate their plan of action and effect a junction with the Nizam, the *Pesva* entered Gujarat at the head of a picked force, renewed the engagements with the *Subhedar* concluded last year and then advanced upon Baroda held by Pilaji Gaikvad. Trimbak Rav Dabhade hastened to meet the challenge, marched into Gujarat at the head of ten thousand troops, was joined by *Bhil* and *Koli* levies and by a detachment of the Nizam. The two forces met at Dabhai on 1st April 1731, and the superior leadership of the *Pesva* won the day. Trimbak Rav Dabhade fell on the battle-field and his force was dispersed. The Nizam's attempt to exploit differences in the Maratha Court had once more been baffled and his intrigues defeated. Gujarat was restored to the *Senapati* on whose behalf the Gaikvads worked and brought the Province under Maratha control by 1737.

The battle of Dabhai and Baji Rav's victory forms a landmark in the history of the *Pesvas*. It left the *Pesva* without any serious rival at home and "with all but nominal control of the Maratha Sovereignty". Nizam-ul-mulk thought it convenient to come to terms with the *Pesva* by concluding an agreement in August 1731, by which 'the former was to be at liberty to gratify his ambitions in the south, while the *Pesva* obtained a free hand in the north'<sup>2</sup>.

### *Maratha Expansion in Hindustan.*

From domestic problems we must now turn our attention to bigger problems of foreign policy and expansion of Maratha power Hindustan. The Marathas had crossed into Malva and raided it as far as Ujjain and Sironj in 1703 in the days of Aurangzeb as a reply to the Moghal offensive against their homeland. These raids had been repeated with great boldness in the second decade of the 18th century and Nemaji Sinde, Kanhoji Bhosle, Khande Rav Dabhade,

<sup>1</sup> S. P. D. Vol. X, pp. 59-73.

<sup>2</sup> *Siyah-ul-Mu lakherin*, p. 235 (Panini Ed.), Elphinstone, p. 887, See also S. P. D. Vol. XXX 90, 91, and B. I, S. M. Q.1946, pp. 11-12.



Cimnaji Damodar and other Maratha chieftains had fought the imperial *Subhedars* with varying fortunes. Maratha pressure on Malva was growing and the Marathas desired recognition of their position in the treaty of 1719. This the Moghal *Darbar* would not grant and it became necessary for the new *Pesva* to wrest by arms what his father could not obtain by negotiations. Khandes and Malva were specially assigned to the *Pesva* as his field of operations for levying Government dues, and *Pesvas* troops began to move in this quarter every year. The *Pesva* invaded Malva in person in February 1723 and again in 1724 May, collected *Cauth* and met the Nizam on both the occasions. Home affairs kept him away for the next three years, but his subordinates raided south Malva and laid several places under contribution.

All this while the situation at the imperial capital was fast deteriorating. Aurangzeb's successors were feeble minded persons unfit to rule over his vast empire. They loved comfort, indulged in vice and left the administration to their ministers. A scramble for power ensued among the nobility, each individual and each party fighting for his selfish ends. Distracted by intrigues, divided by parties the Moghal Government fell into neglect, the defence of distant provinces were left uncared for, the army lost discipline and descended into a mere rabble. While the Marathas were attacking Malva and Gujarat the imperial court occupied itself in night revels and excursions to gardens.

#### *Battle of Amjhera (29 November 1728).*

About the end of 1728 two big Maratha armies invaded Central India. The first under the *Pesva's* brother Cimaji Appa entered Malva in November by the Mandu Ghat and surprising the *subhedar* Giridhar Bahadur in his camp at the border town of Amjhera, defeated him on 29th November. The *Subhedar* with several of his commanders was slain, his standard and equipage fell into Maratha hands and his force destroyed. It was a complete victory for Cimaji. The brave defence put up by the *subhedars* son at Ujjain against Maratha onslaught held up the enemy's advance for some time but could not save the province. The mountain passes into Malva were lost to the Marathas; the flood-gates were thrown open and the tidal waters now rushed in and within a decade Malva passed into the hands of the Marathas.

#### *Conquests in Bundelkhand.*

While Cimaji Appa was reducing Malva the *Pesva* entered Bundelkhand at the head of another large army. His help had been invoked by *Raja* Chatrasal, hard-pressed by Muhammad Khan Bangas.

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<sup>1</sup> This and the subsequent discussion of Maratha expansion in Hindustan, is a summary of chapters VII to XIII of my work *Pesva Baji Rav I & Maratha Expansion*. These are based on *Pesva Daftar Selections* particularly XIII-XV, XXII and XXX, and *Jaipur Ahhabars* (MSS.). The *Pesva's* letters printed in appendix of *Brahmendra Svamice Contra* are also very Valuable. Other sources are indicated in my work. See also *Hingne Daftar* Vol. I, pp. 3-7.

Governor of Allahabad. The Bandelas joined the Marathas and invested the *subhedar* in his encampment near Jaitpur. Reduced to great straits Muhammad Khan Bangas invited reinforcements from Allahabad and from Delhi. His son Qayum Khan tried to send relief but was defeated. The imperial Court immersed in its rounds of pleasures had no time to attend to the demands of its Governors Bangas retired from Bundelkhand leaving the Bundelas masters in their home. The grateful Chatrasal rewarded his benefactor with a *jagir* in his principality. The Marathas thus obtained another foot-hold from which to mount their offensive against the Moghal empire.

*Progress in Malva and Bundelkhand.*

*Raja* Jai Singh of Amber and Muhammad Khan Bangas who held between them the Governorship of Malva alternately from 1728 to 1737, tried appeasement and war in turn but neither policy proved successful. Bangas governed the province from 1730 to 1732 chasing the Marathas from place to place but found his resources altogether inadequate to throw them out. *Raja* Jai Singh who succeeded Bangas in the Governorship was the ruler of the important principality of Jaipur, a friend of *Khan-i-Dauran*, *Mir Baksi*, and wielded considerable influence in the Moghal Court. A man of culture and refinement he advocated the policy of winning the Marathas over to the imperial cause by making them large concessions and satisfying their legitimate demands. Aware of the decay creeping over the Moghal empire the Rajput prince entertained secret ambitions of enlarging his kingdom of Amber so as to include in the rich province of Malva. For this it was necessary to persuade the Rajput nobility to accept his leadership and conciliate the Marathas. But diplomacy rarely succeeds unless backed by force and the Rajput was too sensual and pleasure-loving to exert himself in the field. The Rajput princes refused to unite under the Kachva banner and nothing short of the *Subhedari* of Malva would satisfy the *Pesva*. Jai Singh purchased peace by sharing with the Marathas the large sums sent to him from Delhi for the defence of his charge.

From 1732 the Maratha offensive took the form of a two-pronged drive. One army under Sinde and Holkar would pour into western Malva by way of Gujarat while another taking a north-easterly route would enter Bundelkhand and with their Bundela allies ravage the country as far north as Gwalior and Gohad. In 1733 Savai Jai Singh was surrounded near Mandsaur and extricated himself by paying six lakhs as ransom. In 1734 April Bundi was assaulted and Jai Singh's nominee was driven out; a force that had advanced to Sironj under Muzaffar Khan was invested and escaped with difficulty.

Two large armies marched against the Marathas in the cold season of 1734-1735. Vazir Qamruddin Khan came up against Pilaji Jadhav in February 1735 near Narvar, but found himself in great distress by the constant attacks of the light Maratha horse. He sought refuge

in the fort of Orcha and had to bribe the Marathas with five lakhs of rupees before they retired. The second army under the *Mir Bakhsi Khan Dauran* advanced by way of Jaipur and entered Malva through the Mukundra pass. While encamped at Rampura Ranoji Sinde and Malharji Holkar surrounded it and cut off its supplies. Lifting the blockade the Maratha Commanders passed the enemy's rear and invaded Rajputana. This sudden irruption of the enemy caused dismay in Moghal ranks, and their Rajput allies insisted on going back to save their homes. *Khan Dauran's* army retired and while he was at Kotah a meeting was arranged with the Maratha chieftains on 24th March 1735 at which they agreed to accept twenty-two lakhs as *Cauth* for Malva.

"The Marthas", says the author of *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, "continued to extend their ravages and incursions to which they had been encouraged by receiving contributions in order to purchase their forbearance wherever they appeared. When they saw no measures were taken to oppose their movements they recommenced their operations in the next year. At length they assumed absolute dominion of those districts which formerly only paid tribute. By these encroachments the frontier of the empire retrograded while theirs advanced. By the supineness of the Emperor they now occupied the territories as far as Gwalior and approached the vicinity of Akbarabad (Agra)".<sup>1</sup>

#### *Attempts at Conciliation.*

Having succeeded in levying *Cauth* and *Sardesmukhi* in Malva Baji Rav now applied through Savai Jai Singh for their formal cession by the Emperor. He also requested similar grants for Gujarat. The growing encroachments of the Marathas had given rise to serious misgivings at the imperial Court. Was *Raja Jai Singh*, his enemies openly asked, in league with his co-religionists and encouraging their aggressions or was he incompetent to deal with them? When the *Pesva's* demands for tribute from Malva and Gujarat became known at the Court the Turani Moghals declared themselves decidedly against such a disgraceful compromise. The party clamoured for the removal of *Raja Jai Singh* and for placing the defence of the province in more competent and trustworthy hands. The advocacy of *Khan Dauran*, a friend of the *Raja* and leader of the Hindustani party, could not disprove facts of Maratha aggression. There were reports of the Emperor's dissatisfaction with Jai Singh's conduct of affairs. The *Raja* felt that his position was seriously assailed and invited the *Pesva* to a personal meeting at which he hoped to evolve a formula satisfactory to both parties and yet keep the *subhedari* of Malva to himself.

The *Pesva* left Poona in November 1735 at the head of large force. His march in Hindustan created quite a stir at the Courts of foreign rulers. There were wild conjectures about his real intentions and

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<sup>1</sup> *Siyar-ul-Mutakherta*, p. 242 (Panini Ed.).

the *Pesva* added not a little to the confusion by making an appeal to all Hindu rulers to gather under his banner. About the beginning of February he arrived at Udaipur and met the Rana in a formal *Darbar*. Agents began to arrive from Jai Singh and from the imperial Court carrying drafts of agreement which would prove acceptable.

On 4th March 1736 in an atmosphere of great cordiality took place a meeting between the Brahmin Minister of Sahu *Raja* and the Rajput Prince and the prospects of peace seemed very fair. Jai Singh's proposals amounted to the *Pesva* declaring himself a servant of the Crown and in exchange getting his demands conceded.

The Emperor was prepared to bestow *Cauth* and *Sardes mukhi* for the province of Malva, an assignment of thirteen lakhs of rupees on the revenue of districts south of the Cambal and grant an authority to the *Pesva* to levy tribute from the Rajput States from Bundi on the west to Bhadavar on the east <sup>1</sup>. The concessions excited the *Pesva's* cupidity and called forth fresh demands : he went on raising his claims till at last he demanded :—

(i) The *Subha* of Malva inclusive of the tributary States, to be granted in jagir to the *Pesva* and he be appointed Governor of the province.

(ii) The Rohilla Chiefs of Bhopal and Bhilsa to be ejected from the province and their *jagirs* to be made over to the *Pesva*.

(iii) The forts Mandavgad, Dhar and Raisin (commanding the passes in Malva from the south) to be ceded to the *Pesva*.

(iv) The territory up to the Cambal to be granted to the *Pesva* in *jagir*,

(v) An assignment of fifty lakhs of rupees on the revenues of Bengal to relieve the *Pesva's* debts.

(vi) The cession of the holy places of Allahabad, Banaras, Mathura and Gaya.

(vii) The cession of the *Sardes pandeship* of the Deccan and lastly came the demand for another *jagir* of fifty lakhs of rupees in the *Subha* of the Deccan.

From the modest demands for cession of *Cauth* and *Sardes mukhi* of Malva and war indemnity to meet his debts the *Pesva* had gone on to ask for the virtual control of Malva, Bundelkhand, Bengal and the Deccan. This almost took away the breath of the imperial court and it decided to fight. To gain time just then it procrastinated and spun out negotiations till the end of the campaigning season obliged the *Pesva* to retire.

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<sup>1</sup> S.P.D. XV, pp. 93-94 and Grant Duff, I, pp. 431-434 (1912 Ed.).

When the next campaigning season opened the *Pesva* marched into Hindustan at the head of fifty thousand troops. Bhopal and Bhilsa the only islands of opposition held by Rohilla chieftains in the province of Malva, were reduced and the *Pesva* then struck in at north-eastern direction and attacked the Jat *Raja* of Bhadavar.

#### *Sudden Attack on Delhi.*

Having laid Malva and Bundelkhand under contribution the Maratha army stood poised on the Cambal hardly seventy miles from Agra. The advance of the enemy so near the imperial capital constituted a menace of the first magnitude and roused the Court into feverish activity. Large armies were equipped and put into the field under the command of Vazir Qamruddin Khan and the *Mir Bakhsi Khan Dauran*. Royal letters were sent to provincial Governors, Moghal Chiefs and Rajput princes to rush to the defence of the capital and movements of troops and their concentration in the Delhi Agra area were reported from all sides. This it was necessary to prevent and create a diversion and a strong detachment under Malharji Holkar entered the Doab. Holkar crossed the Yamuna at Kalpi and moving swiftly plundered Itimadpur and Firozabad opposite Agra. At Jalesar, however, he was surprised by Saadat Khan, Governor of Oudh and repulsed with losses. The *Pesva's* attempt to distract the enemy and prevent his concentration had failed. Saadat Khan wrote to the Emperor glowing accounts of his victory, boasted of his soon being able to drive the Marathas beyond the Cambal and advised the Emperor to break off negotiations with the *Pesva*.

The *Pesvas vakil* Dhondo Govind who was in the camp of the *Mir Bakhsi* communicated Saadat Khan's account of his success and the violent reaction it had produced at the Court. The *Pesva* was determined "to give a lie to the wild boast and tell the Emperor that he was still in Hindustan and to show him flames and Marathas at the gates of his capital". While the Moghal chiefs were celebrating Saadat Khan's recent victory the *Pesva* making a wide detour through the Jat and Mevat country on the west passed the enemy's rear and arrived in the vicinity of the capital on 29th March 1737. Leaving Barapula and the Kalika temple (near Okhla) to his right the *Pesva* moved his camp to the Kutb Minar and then to the plain where now stands New Delhi. On arriving near the Capital the *Pesva* changed his mind of sacking the city; he knew that the Emperor and Khan Dauran were favourably disposed towards his demands but that the Moghal party was opposing the cessions. He sent letters of friendly professions to the Emperor, invited fresh proposals and to save the city from molestation moved in the direction of the Jhil tank. As the *Pesva's* army was changing grounds the next day the move was mis-understood as retreat and the defenders sallied out to attack the enemy. The *Pesva* lured the Moghal force beyond the protection of its artillery and then enveloping it completely routed it. On 31st March learning of the approach of enemy troops the *Pesva*



disappeared as suddenly as he had arrived before the capital. He hoped to draw the Moghal armies into the arid hills of the Mevat country but the enemy refused to take the bait. Wearied by marching and countermarching the Moghal Commanders retired to their mansions in the capital. By his clever strategy the *Pesva* had outmanoeuvred his opponents and completely immobilised them. The Turani or Moghal party which opposed Maratha ambitions was discredited in the councils of the Empire and the influence of the Hindustani leader, Khan-i-Dauran, the Advocate of the peace policy, once more became supreme <sup>1</sup>.

### *The Battle of Bhopal.*

Nizam-ul-mulk, though he had agreed to give the *Pesva* a free hand in Hindustan, watched his extraordinary progress beyond the Narmada with the greatest anxiety. He thought that the *Pesva's* new entanglements would reduce the latter's resources and allow himself greater freedom. Events however belied the Nizam's expectations. The weakness of the empire revealed itself more and more glaringly as the Maratha-Moghal struggle developed and Moghal arms suffered reverses after reverses. Instead of being checked and driven back the *Pesva* reached the very gates of Delhi and threatened to subvert the empire itself. The Nizam could no longer remain an idle spectator while the bulwarks of the empire were crashing round him. The news of the *Pesva* trying to obtain greater control over his *subha* of the Deccan and rivet further chains on his authority was most disquieting. The Nizam decided to make common cause with the Imperialist Government to save it and save himself thereby.

The Moghal Court having realized its weakness in opposing Maratha encroachments invited Nizam-ul-mulk to its aid and suspended peace talks. On his arrival in Delhi in June old jealousies and suspicions were set aside. Muhammad Sah showered on him favours, gave him the best residence in the capital, and restored to him the government of Malva and Gujarat in the name of his son on the condition that he would drive the Marathas beyond the Narmada <sup>2</sup>. At the head of an army of thirty-five thousand men and a fine park of artillery the Nizam left the capital to seek and it possible destroy the enemy. He marched southward through Bundelkhand where he was joined by Saadat Khan's troops and also those of the Rajput and Bundela chiefs (of Orcha, Datia, Narvar and several other Chieftains) till his force swelled to seventy-thousand. About the middle of December he arrived at Bhopal. His strategy was to catch the Maratha force between two pincers, to crush it between the imperial army under his personal command and another striking from the south under his son Nasir Jang.

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<sup>1</sup> Pesva's letter to his brother in appendix of *Br. Ch.* No, 27.

<sup>2</sup> S.P.D. Vol XV, p. 83.

But the *Pesva* refused to act according to the enemy dispositions. Placing a strong detachment under his brother on the Tapi to prevent succour going to the Navab from the Deccan he invaded Malva at the head of eighty thousand horse and came up with the Nizam at Bhopal. The Nizam surrounding himself with his artillery waited for the Marathas to attack him. He had not taken sufficient care to protect his line of communications with Delhi and Hyderabad and soon found himself completely isolated and invested in the town of Bhopal. The grain supply in his camp soon gave out and men and animals famished for want of food. Two detachments that tried to carry relief to the beleaguered army one from Sah Jahanpur and the other from Burhanpur were cut up. The Nizam's attempt to break out and escape under cover of his powerful guns was foiled by the Maratha horse hovering round and galling the Moghal army with showers of rockets and match-lock fire. Unable to hold out any longer the Nizam begged for terms and on 7th January 1738 at Duraha Sarai<sup>1</sup> signed the convention promising to grant to the *Pesva* the whole of Malva, the complete sovereignty of the territory between the Narmada and the Cambal, to obtain a confirmation of, it from the Emperor and to use every endeavour to procure the payment of fifty lakhs of rupees for war expenses.

The victory of Bhopal marks the zenith of the *Pesva's* triumphant career. Nizam-ul-mulk who was opposing the grant of *cauth* and *Sardes mukhi* of Malva had been forced to concede the entire province and recognise *Pesvas* claims upto the Cambal. The *Pesva* accomplished the conquest which he had set before himself since he came to the *Pesvaship*. Creating powerful armies out of divergent elements of Maratha siledars he invaded Hindustan, brought to grief one imperial army after another sent against him, acquired immense territory till the Maratha outposts reached the southern banks of the Cambal and the Yamuna. The disaster of Amjhera first opened the eyes of the imperial Government to this menace from the south. But the measures it adopted to fight were feeble, half-hearted and lacked in consistency. The friendship of Raja Jai Singh enabled the Marathas to plant their power firmly in Malva. The later attempts of the Moghal Government to oust the Marathas failed on account of the pusillanimity of its leaders and want of energy in its administration. The defeat of the confederate armies at Bhopal by the *Pesva* established the supremacy of Maratha arms in Hindustan and announced the birth of a new imperial power.

The Nizam failed to keep his promise of getting the convention ratified within his life-time. But no new *subhedar* was sent from Delhi and the province remained in Maratha hands. Since and

<sup>1</sup> Duraha is about 20 miles S. W. of Bhopal. Sardesai is obviously incorrect when he says Duraha is 64 miles north of Sironj.

<sup>2</sup> The best authority for the campaign is the *Pesva's* letters to his brother in *Bramhendra Svami's Caritra*, Appendix Nos. 33-36. Grant Duff has used them but his chronology of events is wrong.

Holkar set up their headquarters at Ujjain and Indore and shared the revenue with the *Pesva*. The invasion of Nadir Sah next year convulsed the Moghal empire and hastened its decay. The Emperor became a shadow figure exercising little direct authority beyond the provinces of Agra and Delhi.

The upheaval at Delhi mystified the *Pesva*. The revolution threatened to destroy the hegemony acquired by Maratha arms in the imperial councils. If Nadir Sah were to stay in India and found a new dynasty subverting the Moghal line, Maratha supremacy would be gone and their new conquests would be imperilled. Baji Rav recognised the seriousness of the threat and talked of uniting Indian powers against the foreign aggressor. But before he could recall his forces from the siege of Bassein the Persian conqueror had turned his back on India and was returning to his country enjoining on all Indian rulers to render allegiance to the Moghal Emperor and obey his commands.

### *Conquests on the West Coast.*

While Maratha power was expanding in Hindustan the home front was not neglected. Large part of Maratha territory on the western Sea-board was in foreign hands. The Siddis of Janjira had long thwarted Sivajis attempts to reduce their island castle and annihilate their power. The Portuguese clung to the coastal strip in north Konkan. Aurahgzeb had transferred his conquests in Kohkan to the Siddi Chiefs of Janjira and put them in possession of important fort of Rayagad, Mahad, Dabhol, Ratnagiri, etc. The Siddis had also seized Revas and Thal near Kolaba from which they harassed Maratha shipping in Panvel creek. The Siddi's power from Janjira as centre spread in a fan-like fashion right up to the western *ghats* and covered the entire modern district of Kolaba with the exception of Pen and Alibag. His possessions thus included Rayagad, capital of the great Sivaji and a place of sanctity to the Marathas which their racial pride and national honour would not allow them to tolerate in alien hands.

These political considerations for expelling the Siddi were aggravated by a personal quarrel. Brahmendra Svami, a religious mendicant, was much respected in the *Pesvas* family and shown very high regard in the Maratha Court. He had built a lovely shrine dedicated to Siva at Parasuram near Ciplun. Siddi Saat, the Siddi Commandant of the nearby fort of Anjanvel, taking offence with the Svami made a sudden raid on the temple on Mahasivaratri day in 1727 and levelled it down. The Svamis rage knew no bounds, he rained curses on the Siddi, left Konkan and settled at Dhavadsai near Satara preaching a crusade against the Siddi defiler of his shrine.

Kanhoji Angre to whom the west coast districts had been assigned as his sphere, was lukewarm towards the adventure. He died in 1729 and his son Sekhoji was won over the project of reducing the

Siddi power. A political revolution occurred at Janjira in 1733; the Siddi Chief Siddi Rasul Khan died, in February 1733 and his eldest son and successor was murdered by other claimants to the Command. The son of the murdered Abdullah fled to the Marthas for protection and asked their help in gaining the *Navabship*. A powerful Siddi Chief who was in command of the fleet and was perhaps a partisan of Abdullah agreed to transfer his allegiance and come over to the Maratha side on promise of substantial reward. Though it was the height of summer and end of the campaigning season, two forces one under the *Pesva* and Fateh Singh Bhosle and the other under the *Pratinidhi* were immediately ordered to march to Janjira and seize the place in favour of the Maratha nominee. The *Pesva* descended into Konkan and arrived before the island castle on 2 May 1733. The suddenness of the approach took the enemy unawares. Rajpuri and Khokri "surrendered without resistance, as also the Siddi fleet lying in the port. Sekhoji walked over to the Marathas and with him the *Pesva* sat down to direct the siege of the castle. The rebels fled to the castle and closed its gates before the Marathas could get in.

Janjira was girdled by the sea all round though not far from the mainland. An attacking force without adequate support of a fleet and heavy artillery was helpless before it. Baji Rav looked to Sekhoji Angre to provide naval support for his enterprise. But owing partly to the lateness of the season and partly to the jealousy Angre felt at the intrusion of the King's forces in his field, his ships were slow in supporting the *Pesva's* action. Sekhoji occupied himself with the attack on Siddi's places like Revas, Thal, etc., in his territory. In the meanwhile the Siddi chiefs had appealed successfully to the English at Bombay and Capt. Mac Neale arrived on the scene with a powerful squadron and the attack on Janjira had to be abandoned.

Srinivas Rav *Pratinidhi* who had been sent into south Konkan bribed the *killedar* of Rayagad and occupied the fort on 8th June. But his further operations were thwarted by intrigues. So strong was the jealousy between the *Pesva* and the *Pratinidhi* that they began to work at cross-purposes with each other making further progress in the expedition impossible. The *Pesva* tired of sitting before Janjira without hope of reducing the place, advised the *Darbar* to accept the terms offered through the English. Truce was declared and on 1st December Abdul Rahman the *Pesva's* nominee was seated on the Masnad, Baji Rav abandoned the siege and marched away from Rajpuri.

The results of the campaign were not unsubstantial. The Siddi was driven back to the sea : the Siddi's territory dwindled to the rock islands of Janjira, Underi and Anjanvel and Gowalkot in the south. The Marathas became masters of his land possessions. Raygad, the capital of the great Sivaji was recovered as also Caul and Thal and

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Revas. Siddi Saat of Anjanvel continued to give trouble for some time but he was finally overcome in April 1736 and a final treaty was concluded ratifying the truce arrangements and establishing double government in the eleven *mahals* formerly owned by the Siddi. The Siddi's power declined and the Siddi became in all but name a tributary of the Maratha State.

*Conquest of Salsette and Bassein.*

Another remarkable success won by the *Pesva's* arms in Konkan was the defeat of the Portuguese and acquisition of their Province of the North comprising the island of Salsette and the coastal strip covered by Bassein and its dependencies. The Portuguese had seized these parts of the Maratha country two hundred years ago and made Bassein the capital of their province and raised mighty fortifications round it. Bassein lay with a fertile tract; its equable climate, administrative importance and commercial prosperity drew to it many rich Portuguese families from Goa and the entire territory came to be looked on as a valued possession of the Portuguese empire in the east.

In the eighteenth century however, Portuguese power was on the decline. The command of the sea had passed to the Dutch and the English and the Portuguese clung to their outposts in India with difficulty. But they had not the wisdom to understand their unstable position; they had few friends among country powers and they made their subject people their worst enemies by their harsh and intolerant treatment. The inquisition was active in Goa and Bassein from 1550 persecuting all those who did not conform to the Christian doctrine or dared to worship publicly in their own way. Those who could, fled the country and settled in the neighbouring districts. But there were many who could not and clung to their hearths and homes in the hope that deliverance would come from their compatriots beyond the borders. As soon as Maratha rule was established in Kalyan (1719) the popular discontent found expression. The Hindu leaders invited the *Pesva* to deliver them from foreign yoke and restore their religious liberties. The Portuguese aroused by the danger threatening them began to put Salsette and Bassein in a proper state of defence and ordered the local people to contribute money and labour. A cry went up among the local people and in desperation they invoked the *Pesva* to take possession of the country offering him their whole-hearted co-operation in the enterprise.

Portuguese activities in Konkan were also running counter to the interests of the *Pesva*. In the domestic dispute of the Angre family the Portuguese supported Sambhaji Angre who was flouting the *Pesva* and became particularly obnoxious to him. Probing attacks on Portuguese territory had started since 1723. Their safety against these and the intrigues of their Hindu subjects now lay in the new



fortifications that were going up and these the Portuguese pursued with vigour. The attack on Bassein could no longer be delayed and in March 1737 a strong force under the *Pesvas* brother Cimaji Appa prepared to strike at the Portuguese possessions and collected in secrecy at Kalyan.

The terrain of Salsette and Bassein is peculiar; the narrow coastal strip is cut up in many places by channels made inland by the sea and the rivers flowing out. This is not a country for large-scale movements of cavalry. Knowledge of fords and their control therefore becomes an important factor of military tactics in this area. The *Pesvas* contacts with the local population of Salsette and Bassein and the secret information obtained from them of the geography of the country and the strength of their posts proved very useful in this respect. On the night of 26th March at low tide an advanced detachment of Maratha horse surprised the patrol at Thana ford, attacked the St. Jeronimo tower and secured the passage into the island. The next day the entire force poured in with its equipment and stores. The surprise was complete. The Governor frightened out of his wits left the island on 27th March and the main fort of Thana surrendered without much fighting. Detachments sent out soon reduced the remaining fortified places Belapur, Parsik Marol and only Bandra and Varsova held out against the attack. While the main army was attacking Salsette another force, 2200 strong, rapidly marched on Bassein through hilly country. The same strategy had been planned here, but failed on account of the extra precautions taken by the enemy. Means had to be devised to besiege and assault the formidable fortress of Bassein. Outlying posts were seized, but the embattled walls of the fortress guarded by the sea on three sides and open only to the north stood frowning on the besiegers. Three attacks to escalate the walls made during the rains were beaten back with heavy losses. As the fair season opened the Portuguese received reinforcements and attacked Marathas in the open country cutting up their detachments at Mahim and Dharavi. In the November of 1738 they even tried to recover Thana and sent a large expedition which however, failed disastrously. The Portuguese Commander Pedro De Mello was killed on the spot and his ships fled back.

The Marathas now going over to the offensive collected a formidable force for the final assault on the enemy's stronghold. Another force invaded Goa and cut off supplies going to Bassein. The defenders were reduced to great straits; they melted even church plate to purchase ammunition from Bombay, but would not talk of surrender. Maratha artillery roared night and day pounding the fortress and thus leaving the enemy no time to recover his breath. Mines were run to the walls and exploded on 2nd May. A general assault followed and after two days of heavy fighting Bassein capitulated on 5th May 1739 and the garrison marched out. Bassein fell never to rise again,

The conquest of Bassein was long cherished by the Marathas as a matter of national pride and its transfer to the English was stoutly resisted in the first Maratha war. The gains to the Marathas by the campaign were the conquest of practically the entire province of the North of the Portuguese possession twenty-two leagues in length from Varsova to Daman with their four chief ports, three hundred and forty villages and a revenue of 2,50,000 rupees. They acquired, besides Bassein eight cities, twenty fortresses, the famous island of Salsette. Daman and Diu however escaped the fate of Bassein.



Maharashtra State Gazetteers



## CHAPTER 4\*

### EXPANSION OF MARATHA POWER (1741—1761)

#### BALAJI BAJI RAV

*Early success in the north.*

BAJI RAV DIED IN APRIL 1740 AND WAS SUCCEEDED in the *Peshvaship* by his son Balaji then twenty years old, The Chief Minister, by now, ruled in the *Raja's* name the central region of Maharashtra, north Konkan recently wrested from the Portuguese and levied *cauth* on Khandes, Malva, Bundelkhand and territories beyond. He commanded the largest army in the Maratha State and his resources were very great. This gave the *Pesva* family a preponderance in the *Raja's* council and therefore the succession of the son to his father's post was never in doubt. The story of the opposition of Raghuji Bhosle and Babuji Naik to the succession of Balaji Rav first accepted by Grant Duff and implicitly followed by later writers on the authority of *Bakhars*, appears to be an attempt made by the *Pesva's* protagonists to defend his attack on the Nagpur Chief three years later and has little basis in fact.

The succession of Balaji Baji Rav marked no ostensible change in-policy. The new *Pesva* indicated that he would follow his father's expansionist policies in all respects and expressed his desire to maintain cordial relations with Rajput princes who had facilitated Maratha entry into Malva and their subsequent successes in Hindustan. The *Nizam's* humiliating defeat at Bhopal (1738) had brought the whole of Malva under Maratha control, but the imperial grants which would put the seal of authority on the transfer had been delayed. Young Balaji, therefore, within four months of his investiture marched into Hindustan to renew friendly contacts with the Rajput Chiefs and undo the mischief created by the *Nizam* during his three years' stay in the imperial capital. The *Nizam's* influence at Delhi, however, was on the wane and the old man, powerless for mischief any more, was hard put to hold his own against his son in the Deccan. He was coming south to meet the threat of Nasir Jang's revolt and his position looked almost hopeless. The *Pesva* was anxious to obtain the wizar's good-will for his northern projects and instead of exploiting the situation of a civil strife in

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\* This Chapter is contributed by Dr. V. G. Dighe.

<sup>1</sup> Grant Duff, Vol. II, pp. 3-4 (1912 Ed.);

<sup>2</sup> Hingne Daftar, Vol. I, pp. 15-19.

the family of his neighbour, he went out of his way to call on the *Navdb* at Edalabad (on the Purna) on 17th January 1741 and assure him of his support to quell the revolt. The friendly assurances caused dismay in the ranks of the rebels and helped the *Nizam* to overcome his son without difficulty.

The *Pesva* marched northward levying *Couth* on his new conquests and arrived at Dholpur on 12th May. Here he met Savai Jai Singh and concluded with him a pact for mutual aid. Both parties swore loyalty to the imperial throne; Jai Singh presented the *Pesva* a sum of fifteen lakhs of rupees to meet his expenses and promised to obtain for him imperial *sanads* for the *subhedari* of Malva. The *Pesva* on his side agreed to present himself before the Emperor, prevent other Maratha chieftains from crossing the Narmada and raiding imperial territory and send four thousand troops for the imperial service <sup>1</sup>. Jai Singh's negotiations were approved and the grants for Malva were issued in September. The whole of the province now passed into Maratha possession. The *Pesva's* chiefs put their seals to the treaty later in 1743.

The *Pesva* however was not satisfied with the *Subhedari* of merely one province. As expressed in one of his famous declarations he desired the golden river from the north flow southward to enrich the regions of Maharashtra, to utilise the resources of the empire to make his country strong and rich. Next year he again appeared in Bundelkhand and sent envoys to claim *cauth* for Agra, Allahabad, Patna and Bengal. The imperial court afraid to refuse the *Pesva*, called on him to fulfil the promise of protecting imperial domains from the disturbances caused by Raghuji Bhosle's invasion of Bengal and involved him in a dispute with that chief. The Bengal episode is narrated in greater detail later and need not detain us here.

In 1744 there was again trouble in Bundelkhand. The Bundela chiefs were not very happy about the growing demands of the *Pesva* and rose all over. Two years back they had with great audacity attacked a Maratha revenue collector and put him to death. The terrible retribution this called on them did not prevent these chiefs from revolting once more. Military posts at Jhansi and Sagar were permanently established in this rugged region and put under able Commanders. Bhilsa was recovered from the *Navab* of Bhopal in March 1745 and Jaipur, the storm-centre of Bundela disaffection, was stormed in 1746 May.

In 1748 the *Pesva* visited Hindustan for the last time. Abdali had invaded Punjab and there was rift among *Pesvas* chiefs about the policy to be followed in respect of Jaipur succession. The *Pesva* visited Delhi and then entered Jaipur territory to bring about a settlement in the dispute of Jai Singh's sons. The expedition was barren of results.

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<sup>1</sup> S.P.D., Vol. XV, p. 97;

<sup>2</sup> Rajwade Vol. VI, p. 267.



The province of Bengal requires our attention now. This rich province in Moghal times comprised Bengal proper, Bihar and Orissa and had so far fortunately escaped the welter of anarchy and misrule that had engulfed the rest of the empire. Mursid Quli Khan had ruled the province wisely till his death in 1727 and after him his son Suja Khan till 1739. With Suja Khan's death in 1739 the peace of Bengal was disturbed and the revolt and usurpation of Alivardi Khan, the deputy governor of Bihar brought the Marathas on the scene. Alivardi led an army from Patana into Bengal, defeated the successor of Suja Khan and by heavy bribes to the imperial court obtained its consent to his own appointment as Governor of the province. The followers of the family of the old *Navab* however refused to acknowledge the title of the usurper. They challenged his authority and invited the neighbouring Maratha chief, Raghuji Bhosle, to their aid. Thus started the Bengal incursions of the Marathas which dried up the resources of the province and brought Moghal authority in the eastern region to the lowest level and made Bengal a fruitful field of conquest.

Bengal lay contiguous to the territory of Raghuji Bhosle who had established himself in Berar and Gondvan (modern Madhya Pradesh) and in the general scheme of Maratha expansion, was marked as the Bhosle's field of conquest. Raghuji could with little difficulty send his horse into Orissa or pour them into the plains of Bihar through the jungle-paths of Chattisgad. The local populace was altogether docile and the army which sustained the usurper's power was composed of mercenary Afghan soldiery which was disloyal and ready enough to sell itself to the highest bidder. The family of Mursid Quli Khan was bitterly opposing the new *Navab's* rule and the Bhosle's advent into Bengal promised early results.

But Raghuji had counted without the opposition of the *Pesva*. He was a typical Maratha, a dashing soldier and a skilful leader of cavalry. His resources compared to that of the *Navab* of Bengal were meagre, but the general situation favoured the Bhosle. The Maratha also had an overweening pride in his own prowess ; he failed to recognise the political change that had come over the Maratha State and affected to ignore the *Pesva's* supreme authority. He claimed equal rank with the *Pesva* and only succeeded in inviting the latter's hostility. The differences of the two Maratha chieftains were cleverly played upon by the Moghal Court and the *Subhedar*, and the province of Bengal which looked like a ripe fruit ready for the plucking, slipped out of Maratha hands to be swallowed by the East India Company.

The first revolt against Alivardi Khan occurred in Orissa. Rustum Jang, the deputy Governor of the Province and son-in-law of deceased Suja Khan refused to acknowledge the authority of the regicide and declared his own independence (1741). He was however routed by the *Navab's* troops and fled southward. Here he obtained the

aid of Raghuji Bhosle, and marching back with a small Maratha detachment, reoccupied Cuttack, but was again defeated and fell back on Nagpur with his Maratha allies (December 1741).

Raghuji Bhosle by this time had returned from Karnatak. His resounding successes in that region had greatly added to his strength and raised his prestige at the Maratha Court. He immediately plunged into the Bengal adventure. In April 1742 a strong force under Bhosle's *Divan*, Bhaskar Ram, advanced swiftly into Bengal through Pacet and entered the Bardvan district. Alivardi Khan in an effort to save his capital threw himself across the invader's path, was promptly surrounded and barely escaped with his life. The whole of Bengal West of the Ganga passed into Maratha hands; Mursidabad, the *Navab's* capital, was raided on 6th May and Hughli, Bengal's chief port, was seized in July. The Marathas spread over the country demanding tribute wherever they went. A lurid picture of Maratha atrocities during the period of occupation is drawn by the Bengali poet Gangaram in *Maharashtra Puran*. The picture is obviously painted in deep shades and has done grave injustice to Maratha character.

Bhaskar Ram made Katva his headquarters and in the security provided by the swollen rivers and by his light horse, was celebrating *Durga Puja*, the national festival of Bengal, in September. On the 27th of that month in the early hours of the morning while the Maratha camp was resting after the night's festivities, it was surprised by the *Navab's* troops. Bhaskar Ram who was for some time apprehending danger, immediately broke up his camp and abandoning his equipage and property beat a hasty retreat towards the forests of Chattisgad. His detachments also vacated Bardvan, Hughli, Hijli and other places. Near Medinipur he made an attempt to hold up his pursuers, but failing, withdrew to Nagpur. Bhosle's first attempt to levy *cauth* on Bengal and bringing the province under Maratha influence ended rather ingloriously (December 1742).

Raghuji Bhosle immediately fitted another force and personally led it into Bengal. The new *Pesva* was campaigning in Bundelkhand and was known to be negotiating with the Moghal *Darbar* for the *cauth* of Bengal. Raghuji was ill at ease and was anxious to know the *Pesva's* intentions. He met the latter at Gaya but the Brahmin minister was too deep for the forthright Maratha and refused to divulge his plans. On the Bhosle's return to his camp at Katva the *Pesva* advanced into Bengal and met Alivardi Khan at Plassey. Here they agreed that the *Navab* should pay Sahu *Raja*, the *cauth* for the province through the *Pesva's* agency besides 22 lakhs of rupees to the *Pesva* himself for his expenses. In return the *Pesva* stipulates that he would settle with Raghuji and not allow him to disturb the peace of the province. He then immediately started in pursuit of the Bhosle. Raghuji broke up his camp at Katva and hastily retired in the direction of Nagpur. The *Pesva* however by rapid movements

overtook the Bhosle's rearguard at one of the passes near Pacet and captured his camp equipage. The *Pesva* had succeeded in humbling his rival but unwittingly gave a lease of life to the tottering rule of the Moghal *Subhedar*.

Raghuji now realised the hopelessness of succeeding in Bengal in face of the *Pesva's* hostility. He met the *Pesva* at the *Rajas* Court and came to an understanding with him obtaining for himself the untrammelled lease of the eastern province (31 Aug. 1743). There was a show of burying the hatchet but both parties remained suspicious and continued scheming against one another.

In 1744 February a fresh force under Bhaskar Ram took the field and entered Bengal by way of Orissa and Medinipur. Bhaskar Ram this year was in a grim mood and struck out in a determined manner. Alivardi Khan was at his wits' end to meet this fierce onslaught. His submission to the *Pesva's* demands had brought him little comfort. The three years' continuous fighting had exhausted his treasury and dried up his revenues; the large armies raised by him were in arrears and therefore sullen. The *Navab* was in a desperate mood ; finding himself unable to oppose the Marathas in the field he invited Bhaskar Ram and his colleagues to a conference to discuss peace terms and had them all murdered as they were entering the tent (31 March 1744). Treachery succeeded where arms could not and the Maratha army threatening Bengal melted away giving the *Navab* a breathing respite.

But Raghuji Bhosle would not allow Alivardi Khan's base treachery to pass unavenged. There were serious mutinies in the *Navab's* army and as soon as Raghuji heard of them he crossed into Orissa (March 1745) occupied Cuttack and then advanced into Bihar. A heavy indemnity of three crores of rupees was demanded for the murder of Maratha generals. Alivardi contrived to beguile the Maratha until he had suppressed the mutinies. Fighting was then resumed and Mursidabad was raided by Maratha light troops on 21 December 1745. Four days later the *Navab* succeeded in coming up with the main Maratha army near Katva and dispersed it with his cannon. Fighting went on intermittently till the end of the campaigning season.

There were again serious disturbances in the *Navab's* army from 1746-1748. The Pathan chieftains who formed the backbone of his military strength, revolted one after another and made Alivardi's rule precarious. The *Navab* however showed great steadiness and courage in fighting and overcoming the rebels. The *Pesva* in the meanwhile had renewed his attempts to obtain the *cauth* of Bengal for himself and put the Bhosle on the alert. The result was Raghuji was unable to take advantage of the *Navab's* difficulties. Orissa however remained with him and from Cuttack as his base he made annual incursions into Bengal by way of Medinipur. The *Navab* built a cantonment at this place and posted himself there for over a year to prevent the Marathas breaking into Bengal. In

1749 he led a fresh army into Orissa and recovered Cuttack from the Bhosle's agent. But no sooner was his back turned than the Marathas returned and drove out the Moghal garrison and occupied the province. The fact was Orissa was too distant to be defended from Mursidabad with an active enemy striding across the route. The province itself was too poor to maintain a big garrison and the Bengal treasury had been depleted by constant warfare. Weary with age and privations of war Alivardi Khan concluded a treaty with Raghuji Bhosle conceding him the surplus revenue from Orissa and 12 lakhs of rupees as *cauth* for the rest of Bengal. The Bhosle on his part agreed not to molest the peace of Bengal.

Raghuji Bhosle thus obtained a firm foothold in the eastern region and Bengal passed into the orbit of Maratha influence. The Marathas however could not exploit their advantage to the full. The *Pesvas* jealousy of Raghuji never abated and the atmosphere of suspicion had a dampening effect on Bhosle's activities. Raghuji died in 1755 and his successors had neither his abilities nor his courage. The English rose in power defeating Alivardi's successor in 1757 and the *cauth* of Bengal ceased to be paid from 1761<sup>1</sup>.

### **Rajputana.**

The ruler of Jaipur was the leader of the Hindustani party at the Moghal *Darbar* and friendship with him had so far formed one of the cardinal points of policy pursued by the Marathas in Hindustan. Savai Jai Singh who ruled Jaipur from 1699 to 1743 had come to occupy a unique position in the Indian political world. As the leader of the Hindustani party he dominated the Moghal Councils with the aid of his Maratha allies. He had convinced the puppet monarch at Delhi that the best way to treat with the Marathas and stop their inroads was to appease them by making the *Pesva* the *subhedar* of Malva and granting him *cauth* over the imperial domain. As a servant of the Crown, Jai Singh had argued, the *Pesva* was bound to keep peace and prevent other Maratha chieftains from disturbing it. A settlement on these lines had not only facilitated Maratha entry into Hindustan but also assured that the opposition to Maratha expansion would be local. Thus with Savai Jai Singh's help Baji Rav had come to possess Malva, obtained a footing in Bundelkhand and was collecting tribute as far north as Agra and Allahabad.

On the death of his father Balaji visited Jai Singh in 1741 and promising to pursue the same friendly policy, obtained the formal grants for Malva. Savai Jai Singh died in 1743. The Moghal power had already declined and with the removal of the veteran Jai Singh the Rajputs became leaderless. A wise and firm leadership at this stage would not only have strengthened the Maratha-Rajput alliance but could have transformed the Rajputs into the staunchest supporters

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<sup>1</sup> For original material in Marathi see *Purandare Daftar* 1, 150, 152 and Rajwade III, pp. 208, 217, 220, 222 & VI, pp. 144-146, 170, S.P.O. Vol. XX, pp. 21-50. The details of the episode are very ably narrated by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in 'Fall of the Mughal Empire' Vol. 1 pp. 87-180. Sejawalkar's article in the Deccan College Bulletin, Vol. II, pp. 360-382 is useful.



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of the Maratha objective of *Hindu pad-padsahi* or revival of Hindu power. The new *Pesva* however could not provide this type of leadership; his shifting and grasping policy in Rajputana ended the traditional Maratha-Rajput alliance and alienated the Rajputs from the Marathas.

Isvari Singh, the elder son of Savai Jai Singh, on coming to the *Gadi* promised his younger brother Madho Singh an appanage of 24 lakhs of rupees. Madho Singh being born of a Udaipur princess would not be satisfied with this. He contested the succession with his brother and demanded the partition of the Jaipur principality. With the aid of Udaipur troops he invaded Jaipur. Isvari Singh who had secured the help of Sinde and Holkar easily beat off the attack and repudiated the agreement. At this stage Madho Singh succeeded in winning over Malhar Rav Holkar by heavy bribes and renewed the contest. At the battle of Rajmahal in March 1747 the allies were once more defeated and Madho Singh's levies were completely routed. Both parties sent their agents to the *Pesva*. Sinde had already protested against breach of the plighted word, but Holkar's persistent pleading of Madho Singh's cause and the latter's promises of considerable cessions to the *Pesva* made the *Pesva* shift his ground and he advised his generals to support Madho Singh and press Isvari Singh to cede him 24 lakhs worth of territory. He argued that thus both the princes would be satisfied and Maratha interests would be served.

In May 1748 the *Pesva* entered Jaipur State with a formidable army. Isvari Singh assumed a very submissive tone and sent his envoys to treat with him. The latter's demands rose very high. He pressed for a partition of the Jaipur Kingdom and demanded a war indemnity of fifty lakhs of rupees. When Isvari Singh pleaded his inability to satisfy these demands his territory was invaded by Holkar's troops, and Isvari Singh after some protracted fighting agreed to cede to Madho Singh five *paraganas*. Malhar Rav Holkar was appeased with a heavy bribe and promises of indemnity.

The tribute promised by Isvari Singh was never received. The Rajput prince had neither his father's intelligence nor his bravery. His dispute with his brother was draining his treasury. The gathering misfortunes unbalanced the *Rajas* already weak mind. He now surrounded himself with low domestics and sycophants and removed his capable ministers from office. When therefore a fresh Maratha army invaded Jaipur at the end of 1750 for demanding arrears no courtier would come forward to meet the infuriated Maratha leaders and treat with them. In a mood of despondency the *Raja* swallowed poison and to ensure that it may not fail caused a cobra to bite him. The Maratha army arrived before Jaipur next day when the city lay lifeless before them. Soon it became known that Isvari Singh out of sheer desperation had put an end to his life and was beyond the reach of his tormentors.



Holkar and Sindhe now invited their protege Madho Singh to Jaipur and seated him on the *Gadi*. They would not rest content now with arrears and a war indemnity. They demanded cession of one fourth of Jaipur territory. The horrible death of their prince had already embittered the Rajputs against the Marathas and the hitter's desire to profit by their misfortunes infuriated them. Madho Singh no longer desired Maratha protection and was anxious to shake off his erstwhile friends. His secret schemes of killing the Maratha leaders with poisoned food did not succeed, but the populace rose against the invaders and in a riot in the city three thousand Deccanis were massacred. A truce was patched up by which the Marathas were promised compensation for the lives lost and property plundered and also obtained orders on bankers for ransom.

The *Pesvas* rapacity had cost him the friendship of the Rajputs and estranged them from the Maratha cause. The results of the estrangement were to show themselves with greater intensity in the decade to follow.

### **War against the Nizam.**

From 1748 A. D. affairs in the Deccan engrossed the attention of the *Pesva* to the exclusion of those of Hindustan. The great *Nizam-ul-mulk* passed away in May 1748. After his last retirement from Delhi the *Navab* had very wisely avoided contest with the *Pesva* and confined his attention to the organization of his authority in the Karnatak. In the scheme of Maratha expansion the southern region had been assigned to Fateh Singh Bhosle and Bapuji Naik and other smaller chieftains and their incapacity and indolence had prevented the conquest of this region and its integration with the Maratha *Svaraj*. A number of *polygars*, petty *rajas* and *navabs* dotted the Karnatak. In 1743 *Nizam-ul-mulk* had invaded this region, put his own authority as overlord on a firm footing and had ejected the Marathas from Tricinopoly. After that, playing on the mutual jealousies of the Maratha feudatories he had effectively barred their progress southward. Thus though the treaty of 1719 had granted the Marathas overlordship over the Deccan and recognised their right of levying *cauth* and *Sardes mukhi* over the six provinces of the subha, the strong personality of the *Nizam* had prevented the proper realization of the engagement and the Marathas continued to nibble away at the *Nizam's* territory. The great Moghal diplomat passed away in 1748 and thereafter his state became the scene of a protracted fratricidal war. This was too great an opportunity to be missed by the *Pesva* to assert the treaty rights and out of his attempts to do so arose the war which, with short interludes of peace, lasted over a decade.

The issue was complicated by two factors; one was the death of Sahu *Raja* in December 1749 and the efforts of the ladies of his family, Sakvar Bai and Tara Bar, to seize power and oust the

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*Pesva* from supreme authority; the other was the intervention of the French in Deccan politics. Sahu *Raja* had become a figure-head while he was yet living and by a deed of authority signed on his death-bed confirmed the *Pesva* in his supreme position. There was a great amount of dissatisfaction against the usurpation, and Sakvar Bai and Tara Bai both hoped to rally the disaffected elements on their side and rule in the name of the successor of Sahu *Raja*. Sakvar Bai's scheme did not succeed and the lady burnt herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. Tara Bai, widow of Rajaram, secured the succession of her grandson. But Ram *Raja* proved a broken reed. Called from obscurity to the Maratha throne, he from the beginning, leaned heavily on the *Pesva* and in consequence invited the wrath of his grandmother. The Chief Maratha feudatories—the Kolhapur *Raja*, Raghuji Bhosle of Nagpur and others to whom Tara Bai looked for support refused to be drawn in a contest with the *Pesva* and Damaji Gaikwad who raised the standard of revolt, was promptly defeated and imprisoned within a year and a half of Sahu *Raja*'s death.

The *Pesva* had mastered the storm, defeated his rivals at home and was free to deal with the situation arising out of the *Nizam*'s death.

On the death of the *Nizam* his second son Nasir Jang who possessed some ability and had obtained experience of administration and fighting in Karnatak succeeded to the *Navabship*. *Nizam-ul-mulk*'s daughter's son Muzaffar Jang, now challenged his uncle's authority and through the mediation of Canda Saheb obtained French support for his scheme. Dupleix, the French Governor of Pondicerry, saw in the confused situation of the Deccan the possibility of establishing a French dominion in India and readily fell in with the scheme of Canda Saheb and Muzaffar Jang. The allies with a small French contingent pushed on to Ambur and defeated the *Nizam*'s Governor of Kamatak in August 1749. Nasir Jang then marched in person to meet the challenge and for a time Muzaffar Jang's cause appeared hopeless. But Dupleix by his clever diplomacy sowed dissensions among the enemy's ranks; at the battle of Arcot in December 1750 Nasir Jang's army was scattered to the four winds and the *Navab* himself was killed. Muzaffar Jang lost no time in marching to Hyderabad taking with him a French force under the command of M. Bussy. But he was not destined to see the capital of the Deccan. He was killed in a scuffle with the *Navab* of Kadappa and the Deccan army found itself without a chief. Bussy showed great determination and skill in dealing with the situation. He immediately raised Salabat Jang, the younger brother of Nasir Jang, to the *Navabship* and restored order in the army. The discipline of the French force, the effectiveness of its fire-power and the conspicuous ability of its Commander raised the prestige of the French at the *Navab*'s Court and the French became a power to be counted with in Deccan politics.

Bussy's first hurdle before he could entrench himself at Hyderabad was the large Maratha army that had moved into the Raicur *Doab* under the *Pesva*. Circumstances however favoured the Frenchman. Reports of the revolt of Damaji Gaikwad reached the *Pesva* while he was on the banks of the Krsna, which made him anxious to return to Satara. When therefore Salabat Jang under Bussy's advice offered to pay the *Pesva* seventeen lakhs of rupees as *cauth* the latter closed with the overtures and marched back with the utmost expedition (March 1751).

The small tribute of seventeen lakhs of which only two had been paid in cash and the rest in promises, was a mere flea-bite when the *Pesva* was planning the dismemberment of the entire dominion of the *Nizam*. War was again resumed in 1751 November. The *Nizam's* opposition under Bussy's influence had stiffened; the payment of the balance of the tribute of the last year had been put off and the new *Divan* Raghunath Das had started subtle intrigues at Satara to eject the *Pesva*. A treasure of five lakhs sent from Delhi for the *Pesva's* use, was seized by the *Nizam's* officials and detained at Aurangabad. In the meanwhile the *Pesva* had succeeded in persuading Gazi-ud-din, the *Nizam's* eldest son, to claim his father's patrimony and contest the *Navabship* for which he promised him his aid. In return he only asked for the recognition of the treaty of 1719 and cession of the districts of Aurangabad and Burhanpur. Gazi-ud-din, with Nasir Jang and Muzaffar Jang removed from the scene, readily fell in with the scheme and started for the Deccan. The *Pesva* concentrated his troops on his northern frontier near Ahmadnagar to be able to join his nominee and prepared to seize by force the districts of Burhanpur and Aurangabad.

For Bussy this was a critical situation. To prevent a junction of Salabat's enemies he planned a bold strategy. Instead of vainly pursuing the light Maratha horse he proposed a direct inarch on Poona. Moving by way of Ahmadnagar the Moghals engaged the Marathas near Parner on 20th November (1751). On the next day during the lunar eclipse while the *Pesva* was busy with rituals, Bussy's infantry advanced under cover of darkness, surprised the *Pesva's* camp on the Kukdi river and plundered his equipage including gold and silver utensils used by him at the time of worship. Though the casualties in the battle of Kukdi were slight, the defeat was a blow to Maratha prestige and immensely increased French reputation. The Moghal troops advanced devastating Ranjanganv, Taleganv, Dhamdhere but suffered a reverse near Koreganv on 27th November. On 20th December another engagement was fought near Ranjanganv Sandas. Reports also arrived that Raghuji Bhosle's troops had crossed into Berar and seized a number of posts. These setbacks and mutinous condition in the Moghal army abated Bussy's ardour to advance on Poona. The Muslim officers in the Moghal army had

become jealous of the growing influence of the Frenchman. Gazi-ud-din was reported to have started on his southern trek. Bussy became solicitous to come to terms with the *Pesva* and Salabat acting on his advice accepted the propositions in favour of peace and a treaty was concluded on 7th January 1752 at Singve near Rahuri ceding the *Pesva*, Jagir worth four lakhs of rupees <sup>1</sup>.

The *Pesva* could not rest satisfied with a treaty which deprived him of his main objective. He had been duped by Salabat's *Divan* and humiliated by his French force. He now awaited the arrival in the Deccan of Sinde and Holkar with the new claimant Gazi-ud-din. The *Pesva*'s intrigues were bearing fruit; the native troops of Salabat Jang were on the point of mutiny and in an affray killed his *Divan* Raghunath Das in April 1752. The French were losing ground in the Karnatak and in September Gazi-ud-din arrived at Aurangabad, and in return for aid promised to cede to the *Pesva* the districts of Aurangabad and Burhanpur. The *Pesva*'s forces were joined by those of Sindes and Holkars and the partisans of Gazi-ud-din and the stage was set for an attack on Salabat Jang and his French allies. But just then Gazi-ud-din came to a sudden end. He was poisoned by a widow of the late *Nizam-ul-mulk* and died on 16th October 1752. The *Pesva*'s plans once more went awry.

The concentration of huge Maratha forces at Aurangabad, however, overawed Salabat Jang. Gazi-ud-din as the eldest son of the *Nizam* had the prescriptive right to succeed and his challenge had caused serious dissensions among the Muslim nobility. Salabat Jang on the advice of Bussy wisely proposed to yield to the *Pesva* the districts of Aurangabad and Burhanpur and avoid hostilities. A treaty was concluded at Bhalki on 3rd November 1752 which advanced the Maratha frontier from Junnar to the banks of the Tapi in the Khandes. The forts in the districts however were retained by the Moghals though Trimbak, Dhodap and five other forts were seized by the Marathas in 1751.

From Bhalki the *Pesva* marched into the Karnatak. Sripat Rav *Pratinidhi* had already suggested the conquest and consolidation of Maratha rule in Karnatak. But this had been delayed by the incompetence of Maratha leaders in this region. As most of the Karnatak troops were now involved in the struggle between the French and the English raging round Tricinopoly, the region was denuded of troops. The *Pesva* marched upto Srirahgpattam calling on the petty *Rajas* and *polygars* to pay *cauth*. The forts of Dharvad and Hole Honnur were occupied and the *Pesva* returned to Poona about the beginning of the monsoon in 1753.

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<sup>1</sup> The account of the campaign given by Kincaid and Parasnis drawn from Malleson's 'French in India' is all wrong and needs to be scrapped up. I have used the more reliable original correspondence in Vol. I of Rajwade's '*Marathyancya Itihdsaci Sadhane*'. No. 372 of *Purandare Daftar*, Vol. I, gives valuable details of fighting.



Pressure in Karnatak was kept mounting for the next five years. In 1756 a great combination of the Karnatak *Navabs* and Murar Rav Ghorpade was broken at Savanur and half of the Savanur State comprising the modern Dharwad and Belgaon districts was acquired. In 1757 January Mysore was invaded, its capital Srirangpattam was besieged and shelled, and fourteen districts were obtained in lieu of tribute. In the September of the same year Hoskot, Sira, Bangalore were reclaimed and the *Navabs* of Kadappa and Kurnool were defeated by Balvant Rav Mahendale. The Maratha frontier now advanced to the Tungabhadra and Mysore and Arcot acknowledged the *Pesva's* suzerainty.

Bussy during the interval had to face serious intrigues at the *Nizam's* Court. At the beginning of 1753 he fell seriously ill and for change of air went to Masulipatam leaving his force in charge of his deputy. Salabat's *Divan*, Sayyad Laskar Khan, who professed himself a friend of the *Pesva*, and was highly anti-French, demoralised the small French contingent in all possible ways and dispersed it in small detachments on revenue duties. Bussy on his return in the autumn of 1756 defeated the intrigues of the Sayyad, and restored order in his force. To enable him to make regular payments to his troops he obtained on lease from the *Nizam* the province of Northern *sarkars*. This rendered Bussy's force independent of the vagaries of the Hyderabad Court.

But the French were hated by the Muslim nobility at the Hyderabad Court and constant conspiracies were woven to undermine Bussy's influence and deprive him of power. The *Pesva* was privy to all these intrigues and secretly encouraged the parties concerned. In 1756 after the battle of Savanur *Navab* Salahat Jang was led to believe that Bussy had received large sums from Murar Rav Ghorpade for interceding in his behalf and dismissed him from service for his dishonest conduct. Bussy saw through the game of his enemies, quietly retired to Hyderabad and held his ground forcing the *Nizam* to reinstate him in power.

But the seven years' war (1756-63) had started in Europe and French influence was on the wane. There were troubles in Northern *Sarkars* and when the French Commander went away to quell them, fresh plots began to be formed against him. Sah Navaz Khan, the *Nizam's Divan*, decided to wrest authority from the weak Salahat Jang and put it into the capable hands of his brother Nizam Ali. The *Pesva* watched the conspiracy with the greatest interest and was promised a *Jagir* of twenty-five lakhs of rupees by Basalat Jang, another brother of the *Navab*, who had now become the *Divan*. Nizam Ali was the Governor of Berar ; collecting a strong force he arrived at Aurangabad, declared his loyalty to his brother and stoutly opposed any cessions to the Marathas. In consequence a Maratha army entered the *Nizam's* district of Aurangabad at the end of November 1757. Large reinforcements under Ramcandra Jadhav



were moving from Bhalki to join Salabat Jang at Aurangabad and had reached Sindkhed. Dattaji Sinde marched to Sindkhed and invested Jadhav's force. Nizam Ali with his trained battalions under Ibrahim Khan Gardi hastened to the support of the beleaguered force. When however the besieged tried to break out they were fiercely attacked by Sinde (Dec. 12-16) and overpowered. Nizam Ali then sued for peace and concluded a treaty granting to the *Pesva* territory worth twenty five lakhs of rupees and the fort of Naldurg <sup>1</sup>.

Bussy against whom the intrigues of *Sah* Navaz and Nizam Ali had been directed had kept aloof at Hyderabad. He now arrived at Aurangabad and to put an end to the plots, demanded his own *Karbhari* Haidar Jang to be appointed *Divan*. This proposal would have put all powers into the hands of the French Commander. The enraged Nizam Ali invited Haidar Jang to a personal meeting and murdered him. He then flew to Burhanpur and in the tumult that followed Sail Navaz Khan was killed. The *Pesva* used the occasion for seizing Sivneri the birth place of Sivaji.

Bussy was again the master of the situation. He made Basalat Jang the *Divan* of the *Nizam* and proposed to govern through him. But while Bussy was struggling to save Salabat Jang the English had fought and won Plassey and conquered Bengal De Lally, the new French Governor anxious to concentrate his troops for an attack on Madras recalled Bussy and on 21st July 1758 the Frenchman who had bolstered up the *Nizam's* power left Hyderabad forever leaving a clear field for the *Pesva*.

Immediately on Bussy's departure Nizam Ali, Salabat Jang's brother, returned to power and refused to carry out the terms of the treaty concluded only a year ago. He also refused to become the *Pesva's* subordinate ally. The *Pesva* therefore prepared for war and in 1759 November seized the strong fort of Ahmadnagar. This act led to an open rupture between the two powers. Early in December 1759 the war began in earnest. Sadasiv Rav Bhau the *Pesva's* cousin, brought to the field forty thousand cavalry, five thousand infantry trained under Ibrahim Gardi and a fine pack of 'artillery. The Moghals were attacked near Udgir on 3rd February 1760 and routed. Nizam Ali now surrendered to the *Pesva* territory worth sixty lakhs of Rupees and the great forts of Asirgad, Daulatabad, Bijapur and Burhanpur. The power of the *Nizam* was completely broken and the *Pesva* confidently expected to make the rest of the *Nizam's* country part of his dominion within two or three years. The districts of Khandes', Nasik, Ahmadnagar, Solapur and Bijapur formed the new addition to his already extensive Government <sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Rajwade I pp. 73-1J8 and III pp. 491-500.

<sup>2</sup> The account of these transactions is based on S.P.D. I and 25 and letters in Rajwade Vol. I, Nos. 165 and 166 are an epitome of the entire episode.

### Delhi Affairs.

While the *Pesva* was reducing the Deccan, a crisis was brewing in Hindustan. The death of the Moghal Emperor, Muhammad Sah, in 1748 marked a further stage in the disintegration of the already decaying Moghal empire. The Deccan, Gujarat, Malva, Bundelkhand and Bengal had passed outside the orbit of the empire within the life-time of the emperor; the Rajputs gave but nominal allegiance to the shadow figure at Delhi; the *subhedars* of Oudh and Allahabad were assuming independent authority and the frontier province of the Punjab, on the death of its able governor Zakariya Khan in 1745, became the scene of anarchy and misrule. The state of affairs was too tempting not to excite the cupidity of India's north-western neighbour, Afghanistan. Ahmad Sah Abdali, the ablest general of Nadir Sah had recently consolidated his hold over this region and he now thought of emulating the example of his late master. He invaded the Punjab in the early months of 1748, marched up to Lahore and obtained from that capital immense wealth and military stores. Despite a reverse at the battle of Manpur in March 1748, Ahmad Sah renewed his advance next year and in February 1750 obtained from the *subhedar* the revenues of the four districts of West Punjab—Sialkot, Pasrur, Gujarat and Aurangabad — formerly ceded to Nadir Sah. In 1752 Abdali again invaded the Punjab on the pretext that the tribute promised to him had fallen into arrears, seized the *Subhas* of Lahore and Multan and sent an envoy to Delhi to get the agreement ratified. Ahmad Sah who had succeeded his father in 1748, was a dull-witted raw youth of 22 whose education in war and administration had been totally neglected. He pursued pleasure, leaving the administration of stateaffairs to his *Vazir* Safdar Jang and to his Superintendent of harem, Javid Khan. The government became weak and degraded and the emperor never inquired about the realm, the soldiery or the treasury. Javid Khan was a low born upstart actuated by a vulgar greed off wealth and Safdar Jang, the *Vazir*, had neither the wisdom of a diplomat nor the political foresight of a great leader. The Moghal Court altogether lacked any stability or steadying influence. When Ahmad Sah Abdali threatened to march on the capital the frightened monarch immediately set his seal to the cession of West Punjab to the Afghan. At the same time he asked his *Vazir* to take measures to meet the Afghan menace.

The Afghan advance was a greater threat to the ambitious schemes of the *Pesva* than to the security of the insecure empire. The *Pesva's* father, the great Baji Rav had talked of establishing a Hindu dominion in India and had steadily worked towards his objective. The friendship of Savai Jai Singh and Khan Dauran had facilitated Maratha progress beyond the Narmada and had secured them powerful allies at the imperial Court. Balaji Rav had avowed his intention of following in his father's footsteps. The leaders of

the Hindustani party whom Baji Rav had befriended were all dead and *Nizam-ul-mulk* and Qamruddin Khan had once more established the ascendancy of the anti-Maratha Turani faction at the Moghal court. By the mishandling of the succession dispute of the Jaipur State the friendship of the Kachvas House had changed into hatred for the Marathas and contempt for their mercenary attitude. Maratha position in Hindustan was deteriorating and the Afghan now threatened the entire fabric of the Maratha scheme of things. The *Pesva's* moves and countermoves in the decade from 1750 to 1760 have to be judged against this political background.

The Maratha intervention in the succession dispute of Jaipur has been narrated up to 1750 December. After patching up a treaty with Madho Singh, Jayappa Sinde and Malhar Rav Holkar advanced into the Doab against the Rohillas at the invitation of Safdar Jang. The Rohillas had entrenched themselves in the upper *Doab* between Delhi and Oudh and had become a thorn in the side of the *Vazir*. Their lawless and turbulent habits fitted with the times and they were defying imperial authority and ravaging the *Vazir's* territory. The incursions of their compatriot, Ahmad Sah Abdali, had made them audacious; they advanced into the *Navab Vazir's* province, killed his deputy Naval Rai and routed the *Vazir* when he advanced against them (13 September 1750, battle of Ram Catauni). The *Navab Vazir* then obtained the aid of the Marathas and in a campaign that lasted about a year chased the Rohillas out of his *Subha*. In the close-fought battles of Aligad (20 March 1751) and of Fatehgarh (17 April 1751), the Maratha forces covered themselves with glory breaking the Rohilla opposition and scattering it to four winds. Fighting was resumed after the monsoon and the Pathans were once more repulsed and retreated to the Tarai jungles. Here the jungle fever and constant attacks of the Marathas decimated their ranks.

While the campaign against the Rohillas was in the concluding stages, news arrived of the advance of the Abdali in the Punjab followed by frantic messages from the emperor to bring the Marathas to oppose the Afghan threat. The *Navab* then concluded a defence pact with the Maratha captains Sinde and Hojkar (April 1752). The defence of the empire against external foes and internal enemies was entrusted to the *Pesva*. For his armed support the *Pesva* was to receive fifty lakhs of rupees in cash out of which thirty lakhs was the price for keeping the Abdali out. The *cauth* of the Punjab and Sind was likewise ceded to the *Pesva* for military expenses. He was to be appointed *subhedar* of Agra and Ajmer and entitled to the remuneration of the posts. The pact thus put the entire resources of the empire at the disposal of the *Pesva* in return for which he pledged himself to meet aggression at any point. The Maratha objective of establishing suzerainty over the whole Indian continent seemed to have realized itself.

The situation however was not as simple as it appeared on a superficial view. The empire for the defence of which the *Pesva* had pledged himself was a shadow of its former glory. It had no resources, no army, and was riven by internecine disputes. The Abdali was sitting astride the frontier province and menaced the safety of the empire. The situation demanded constant pressure of force and a continuity of policy. If the *Pesva* was to interpose successfully, he had to make up his mind about his friends at the Court and then support them unflinchingly.

The defence pact of 1752 put heavy responsibilities on the *Pesva*. He could levy *cauth* on the Punjab and Sind only by ejecting the Abdali garrison and exercise his authority at Agra and Ajmer by subduing the refractory Jats and Rajputs\* .

On arriving near Delhi, Sinde and Holkar found they could not obtain the promised subsidy and started plundering the country round the capital for their provisions. A great terror hung over the capital. Malhar Rav Holkar then entered into negotiations with Javid Khan and in return for Rs. thirty lakhs to be paid by Gazi-ud-din, the new nominee for the *Subhedar* of the Deccan, agreed to retire. Safdar Jang who had invited the Maratha chiefs had been completely overruled and his authority flouted and Holkar had unwittingly become the instrument for his discomfiture.

Sinde and Holkar retired to the Deccan in May 1752 leaving a small contingent at Delhi for the protection of the Emperor. The position of the *Navab Vazir* deteriorated after the departure of the Maratha force. He became unpopular, with the Emperor and was dismissed from his post on 13 May 1753. The *Pesvas Vakil* at Delhi joined the enemies of the *Vazir* who was driven out of the capital in November. The revolution at Delhi threw the sole authority into the hands of Imad-ul-mulk or Gazi-ud-din II, a boy of eighteen and the *Pesva* on the advice of his *Vakil* at Delhi decided to leave the initiative to this young villain and support him in all his iniquitous dealings.

At the outbreak of the civil war between the Emperor and Safdar Jang, the former had sent an appeal for help to the *Pesva*. His *Vakil* at the capital had also written to him to despatch a strong force northward to watch the situation. In response to the appeal the *Pesva* sent a considerable force under the nominal command of his brother Raghunath Rav then aged 17. Jayappa Sinde and Malhar Rav Holkar accompanied Raghoba and the army crossed the Narmada in September 1753, entered Rajputana by way of Mukundra pass, levied tribute on the Rajput states and then entering Jaipur territory secured arrears from Madho Singh and other chieftains. The emperor's war with Safdar Jang had ended

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\* The pact did not become a scrap as remarked by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in his 'Fall of the Mughal Empire' Vol. II, and accepted by Sardesai. It remained quite a live document as contended by Shejwalkar. See S.P.D. XXI 53, 55.

by this time, but during its last phases Ahmad Sah had developed intense dislike for his new *Bakhsi*, the over bearing Imad-ul mulk and both sides now courted the favour of the Maratha chiefs Ahmad Sah wrote to Raghoba to dissociate from Imad-ul-mulk and follow the advice of his *Vazir*. But Imad had guessed properly the weakness of the Marathas. He bribed Holkar and lured his nominal chief by wild promises of rich rewards. He visited the Maratha chiefs in their camp and persuaded them to punish Suraj Mal Jat for supporting the *ex-vazir's* cause. Raghunath Rav demanded from Suraj Mal a tribute of two crores of rupees. The Jat pleaded his inability to pay this huge sum and shut himself up in the fort of Kumbher. Raghoba laid siege to the place but in the absence of heavy guns could make no effect on the place. Holkar's son Khandrav who had gone to a battery in a state of drunkenness was killed and the father vowed terrible vengeance against the Jat. Malhar Rav asked Imad to send him artillery from Delhi, but this the Emperor disallowed acting on the advice of his *Vazir* Sam Sam-ud-daula. On the contrary he left Delhi and marched southward to organize a confederacy against Imad and the Marathas. Hardly had he arrived at Sikandarabad when news arrived of the Marathas having concluded peace with the Jat Raja (17 May) and of their marching to Delhi. Ahmad Sah immediately abandoned his camp and fled to the capital. A column of the light Maratha horse which had obtained information of the Emperor's movements made rapid marches and surrounded the camp on the night of 26th May. Everything was in a utter state of confusion and terror. The Royal family fell into the hands of the Marathas as also the military stores and camp equipage. Malhar Rav Holkar visited the royal prisoners the next day, comforted them and restored order. With Imad he then proceeded to the capital and was followed by the main army under Raghunath Rav. On 1st June (1754) Ahmad Sah was deposed and made way for another puppet Alamgir II. Imad-ul-mulk became the new *vazir* and promised his Maratha masters eighty-two lakhs of rupees as the price for putting him in power. Another revolution had been effected at Delhi making the Marathas the supreme arbiters of the empire. But they had been unable to carry with them either the general good-will or obtain co-operation of any influential party at the court. Their only ally was an upstart young lad of the most unscrupulous and ferocious nature. Never were great designs attempted with more despicable means.

Raghunath Rav next set himself to realize the tribute promised by the new *vazir*. This proved an impossible task and even after five months stay at the capital only about ten lakhs of rupees came into Maratha hands<sup>1</sup>. In December Raghunath Rav marched away to Gad Muktesvar, settled contributions from the Rohillas

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<sup>1</sup> S.P.D. xxi 60, xxvii 90; 108.



and then moved into Rajputana. He arrived at Puskar on 3rd March (1755), followed by Malhar Rav Holkar levying tribute from the Gujar and Baluc landlords of Ravari and Pataudi. All the while the *Pesva* was urging his chiefs to screw out more and more money from the new conquests and relieve him of his debts. Raghunath Rav offered to go to the relief of Jayappa Sinda who was then besieging Bijay Singh in Nagore, but was informed it was not necessary. Raghoba then visited Gwalior recently seized from the Jat chief of Gohad and returned to Poona in August 1755. His two years campaigning and his unholy alliance with Imad-ul mulk had brought on humiliation on the royal family and alienated Muslim sympathies from the *Pesva's* cause. His unsuccessful attack on the Jat Raja at Kumbher exposed the weakness of Maratha army and the Sinda's interference in the succession dispute of Marwad further embittered the Rajputs against the Marathas. The recovery of the lost provinces of Punjab and Kabul was never so much as mentioned and the grand army allowed itself to be made an engine of oppression plundering defenceless villages and levying tribute on petty chieftains. The respect for the Maratha name became a thing of the past and they came to be detested everywhere for their rapacity.

Sinda's campaign against Marwad did not progress according to expectations. Bijay Singh's cause was popular with his compatriots and Maratha intervention in behalf of the incompetent Ram Singh rallied the Marwadis to the Jodhpur standard. However the first round of the struggle went in favour of the Marathas. Sinda advanced into Marwad after the siege of Kumbher, captured Merta on 15th August and advanced on Nagore 70 miles north of Merta. The *Pesva* did not want Sinda's force to be entangled in a protracted struggle with the brave Rathods while more lucrative undertakings waited for it at Delhi. He advised Jayappa to patch up a treaty with Bijay Singh and go to Hindustan to help him 'cure the debt malady that was eating into his vitals like consumption'. But Jayappa was obsessed with the idea of winning Marwad for Ram Singh and would not listen to his master's advice. Ajmer was captured on 21st February 1755 and Jhalore where the hereditary hoards of the Jodhpur Raja were deposited, was occupied. Jodhpur was invested and Sinda felt confident of concluding the campaign successfully. Bijay Singh however fought back stubbornly at Nagore, and driven to the last extremity by the privations suffered by his army, had Jayappa murdered in his camp (24 July 1755). The crime however, did not benefit Bijay Singh, Sinda's brother Dattaji acted with vigour. While keeping his grip on Nagore he defeated reinforcements coming to the relief of the Rathod chief. The *Pesva* sent succour and the Rathod found themselves outnumbered and altogether helpless. Bijay Singh agreed to pay a fine of fifty lakhs of rupees and surrender half his kingdom to his cousin, besides ceding Ajmer and the surrounding district to Sinda in full sovereignty and in February 1756 the protracted contest came to an end.

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Raghoba had reached Poona in August 1755 and Sinde followed him next April. Imad-ul-mulk found himself in sole command at Delhi untrammelled by his adversaries or his supporters. He now directed his exuberant energies to the conquest of the Punjab. Mughlani *Begum*, the widow of Mir Mannu, had, after the death of her husband in 1753, become the virtual ruler of the province and by her wild pranks had made the province a scene of anarchy and disorder and the Afghan captains of her army were scheming and plotting against her. On the invitation of the *Begum* to aid her, Imad entered the province, seized the *Begum* and appointed his own nominee at the head of the province.

Imad's triumph however proved short-lived. He had roused the wrath of the Afghan chief without the means of meeting his challenge. A force from Pesavar wrested Lahore from the *Vazir's* deputy in October and this was followed by the Afghan King in person in November demanding satisfaction for the unprovoked attack on his authority. Ahmad Sah arrived at Lahore on 20th December and appeared before Delhi on 23rd January (1757). He demanded two crores of rupees as indemnity, the hand of the Emperor's daughter, and all the territory west of Sarhind as the condition of his going back. The Emperor and his *Vazir* powerless to fight and powerless to raise the ransom, sent piteous messages making abject surrender and pleading their inability to meet the demand. Early on 28th January the city was surrounded and Abdali entered the walls ordering a general spoliation of the Moghal capital. None was spared: Muslims and Hindus, rich and poor, were subjected to all kinds of inhuman torture to make them divulge their secret hoards and deliver them to the conqueror. Mansions of Moghal noblemen were dug up for treasure. Many took poison being unable to meet the extortionate demands and many died of wounds inflicted on them by the Afghan soldiery. Then the Sah marched southwards plundering the villages and slaying the inhabitants. Mathura and Brndaban, two places of great sanctity to the Hindus and containing many temples were put to the sword and thousands of inhabitants were massacred. Idols were broken and temples set on fire. Gokul was bravely defended by the *Naga Sanyasis* and then the invader beat back a hasty retreat on account of outbreak of cholera epidemic in his camp. Ahmad Sah carried away with him 12 crores of rupees in treasure and also claimed virgin tribute from the imperial *Zenana*. His soldiers were likewise gorged with booty.

The *Pesvas* main army had returned to the Deccan in August 1755 followed by Sinde in April 1756. The small contingent of Antaji Mankesvar could make little impression on the Pathan hordes and had retreated fighting. Govind Ballal, Naro Sankar and other revenue collectors safely kept south of the Cambal. A fresh army despatched by the *Pesva* under his brother Raghoba on a tribute levying expedition arrived at Indore in February 1757 but

was held up for want of funds. Raghoba had no definite views and no plans. Holkar on whom the young Commander relied loved procrastination and delay. Envoys from Bijay Singh of Marwad arrived in the camp suggesting annulment of last year's settlement and undoing Sinde's work of the last year. Two months were spent in settling the Jaipur tribute and all this while the army lived on the country. Raghoba with one eye glued to the north-west for news of the Abdali was pressing for Sinde's despatch to Hindustan. At the end of May the Maratha vanguard entered the *Doab* and recovered their posts, Etava, Sukohabad, Sikandarabad, Meerut from the agents of the Delhi Court acting under Najib Khan's instructions. Imad-ul-Mulk now joined his old friends and with Raghoba marched towards Delhi in the first week of August and began the investment of the capital.

Delhi was then held by Najib Khan Rohilla who had risen high in the estimation of the Afghan King during his last incursion and at the time of retreat he had been left in supreme command at the capital. The Rohilla had always shown himself as the right hand man of the Abdali and had acted as his right-hand man. He represented the rallying point of all the elements at Delhi that were disaffected towards the Marathas and his destruction suggested itself as the first objective of the new Maratha offensive. And yet when the Rohilla was surrounded and had little chance of escaping Malhar Rav Holkar came forward to intercede in his behalf and obtain him a pardon for his misdeeds. Najib Khan was allowed to depart with his troops and property. Raghoba entered the capital with Imad-ul-Mulk while Najib went to his *jagir* and kept constantly inviting the Abdali to expel the Marathas from Delhi.

At Delhi a new treaty as hollow as the earlier one was concluded by the *Pesva's* representative with the *Vazir* by which the *Pesva* was to receive one-half of the revenues of the entire empire consisting of 22 *Subhas*. The Maratha army then re-entered the *Doab*; while Raghoba took a dip in the holy Ganga at Gad. Muktesvar his troops ranged over the northern *Doab* seizing Rohilla outposts and levying tribute from Najib Khan's *jagir*. The Yamuna was recrossed near Karnal in January 1758 and Raghoba then commenced his invasion of the Punjab.

At the time of his retirement from Hindustan Ahmad Sah had appointed his own son Taimur Sah as Viceroy of Punjab and left with him an army of 10,000 Pathan soldiers under the command of Jahan Khan, one of his ablest soldiers. But the province which had become the scene of rapine and misrule over a long period was not going to be quelled into obedience by a small force of ten thousand. Mughlani *Begum* who had been cheated of the *Subhedari* was ever creating trouble and Admit Beg the *Subhedar* of Jalandar *Doab*, refused to bend his knee before the new viceroy. In the Sikhs they both found a useful instrument

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to overturn the Pathan rule. The Sikhs rose in rebellion on all sides and Adina Beg who had nominally accepted Pathan suzerainty entered into active co-operation with the rebels and defeated the Pathan troops sent against him. Fearing retaliation from the Abdali the Beg opened negotiation with the Maratha Commander camping at Delhi and called him to his aid. The prospects of expelling the Abdali power from the Punjab and adding the frontier province to the Maratha empire was too tempting to be brushed aside. Sarhind where Ahmad Sah had posted Abdul Samad Khan was reduced with the greatest ease by the combined Maratha — Sikh army which then marched on Lahore. Taimur Sah would not think of defence. His father was in trouble in Khorasan and no relief could be expected from that quarter. Taimur abandoned the city on 10th April. Next day the Maratha vanguard entered and pressed the pursuit of the flying army. They attacked the Pathans 36 miles north-west of Lahore and dispersed them, Taimur escaping with difficulty with only his Durrani clansmen. The deep flowing Cinab stopped further pursuit.

There was wild exultation in Maharashtra over the conquest of the Punjab. Raghoba in a tone of vaingloriousness spoke of extending his conquests to Kabul and Kandahar, former parts of the Moghal empire. The Maratha horse had reached the bank of the Indus and quenched its thirst in its waters. The Maratha dream of extending Hindu dominion over the whole of India appeared to have fulfilled itself. But Maratha position in the Punjab was essentially weak. The occupation of the province based on Delhi where there was little support for the Maratha cause was tactically a blunder. Maratha detachments scattered over the Punjab, the *Doab* and Agra had no strong base from which to draw sustenance. The Rajputs were hostile and the Jat *zamindars* defied Maratha armies from behind their forts. Ahmad Sah Abdali looked on the province of the Punjab as a necessary adjunct to his barren Kingdom of Kabul and the seizure of the province was a direct challenge to him to defend his Indian conquests. A war of retaliation by the Pathan conqueror backed by the war-like tribes of the Northwest frontier was inevitable. Only a well-equipped army strongly placed in the Punjab could meet the challenge and hold down the turbulent people.

Such an army was not forthcoming. Raghoba remained at Lahore for a month and then accompanied by Malhar Rav Holkar marched back placing all authority in the hands of Adina Beg who promised an annual tribute of 75 lakhs of rupees for the province. Raghoba reached Delhi in June and moving through Rajputana and Malva arrived at Poona in September 1758. Dattaji Sinde with his nephew was now despatched to the north. He was asked to deal firmly with *Vazir* Gazi-ud-din who was backward in the matter of payment of subsidy, break Najib Khan Rohilla's power, reduce Punjab to order and then march eastward to levy tribute on Bihar and Bengal. Employment of large forces both in Deccan



and in Hindustan had piled the *Pesvas* debts : Raghoba's expeditions had been financial failures and Sinde had been specially asked to take a strong line in the levy of tribute and send the *Pesva* at least a crore of rupees.

Sinde's army under Jankoji reached Rajputana in the middle of 1758. It operated there for about four months raising tribute from Marwar, Jaipur, Kota, Sahpura and other Rajput principalities. At the behest of Raghunath Rav who was going south and of the *Pesva*, Sinde turned towards Delhi. Dattaji Sinde in the meanwhile joined his nephew and the two arrived near the capital on 26 December. The *vazir* was called upon to pay the arrears and after the city had been invested for some time an agreement was reached as to the amount to be paid and on 1st February Dattaji commenced his march towards the Punjab. He reached Machivara on the eastern bank of the Sutlej and there Adina Beg's son came and paid him a part of the tribute for the province. On his advice Sabaji Sinde was posted at Lahore with ten thousand horse and Dattaji turned back to deal with the hostile Najib Khan and effect a conquest of Rihar and Bengal.

Najib Khan's hostility to the Marathas and his active sympathy for the Afghan King was well-known. He was the centre of disaffection and every Maratha chief including the incompetent Raghunath Rav had pointed out the imperative need of crushing the Rohilla and reduce him to impotence. Yet Dattaji told he could keep the Rohilla in his hands, make use of him for the invasion of the eastern province and then destroy him at leisure. He called him to a conference, but when Najib refused to fall in with the Maratha plan, proceeded to attack him. The Rohilla took post at Sukratal, a defensible position on the Ganga and defied Sinde's force for about six months. He secretly organised a conspiracy of the Rathan chiefs of Rohilkhand, made friendly overtures to Sujauddaula and invited Abdali to Delhi to drive away the Marathas.

Abdali did not need any inducement. The expulsion of his son by the Marathas had enraged Ahmad Shah and he was determined to settle issues with the Marathas—He made huge preparations crossed the Indus in the autumn of 1759 and struck his first blow at Lahore. Sabaji Sinde withdrew hastily but several detachments dispersed throughout the Punjab were taken by surprise and suffered heavy losses. Five hundred troopers stripped of all their clothing arrived in Sinde's camp on 23rd November and Sinde knew that a great disaster had befallen his army in the Punjab. He immediately beat a hasty retreat and fell back on Delhi. In the meanwhile Abdali advanced to Sarhind on 27th November, brushed aside a Maratha column that barred his way and crossed the Yamuna and joined Najib Khan. The Rohilla chiefs now joined the Pathan King and on 10th January the entire army began crossing the Yamuna at the Barari ghat ten miles north of Delhi. Dattaji had posted pickets all along the river fords ; when reports



reached him of the enemy crossing he rushed to the scene and in an attempt to drive back the enemy was himself shot down. The death of the Commander caused panic in Sinde's army which dispersed in the greatest disorder.

Sinde's dispersed force was joined by Malhar Rav Holkar near Kotputli. The two attempted to wear out the Pathan by their guerilla tactics, but Abdali was too wary a foe to be intimidated by the futile tactics of Holkar. He surprised him near Sikandarabad on 4th March and routed his troops.

The news of the calamities reached the *Pesva* at Ahmadnagar where he was celebrating the great victory of Udgir. Dattaji Sinde's death and the rout of the armies of Sinde and Holkar had shown the futility of the usual guerilla tactics against the hardy Pathans of the hills, had wiped out all the *Pesvas* gain in the north and set at nought his grandiose scheme of bringing the whole of the continent under the *Bhagva-Zenda*. The *Pesva* realized that the Abdali was too serious a menace to be treated lightly. After a week's deliberation at Patdur it was decided that Sadasiv Rav, the *Pesvas* cousin, who had shown himself more resolute and more businesslike, should command the new army and oppose the Abdali with new tactics and artillery adopted from the French. From Patdur Sadasiv Rav Bhau and the *Pesvas* son Visvas Rav, set out on 16th March 1760 with Balvant Rav Mehendale, Samser Bahadur, Vitthal Sivdev Vincurkar, Nana Purandare and Damaji Gaikvad, twenty-two thousand picked cavalry and eight thousand disciplined infantry and a strong corps of artillery under Ibrahim Khan Gardi. Bhau reached Gwalior on 2nd June. About 18th June Malhar Rav Holkar saw him and he soon brought Suraj Mal Jat to discuss with the Bhau the plans for the conduct of the campaign. Holkar and the Jat stuck to the old style of warfare with the friendly Jat Country as the base from which the enemy was to be harassed. But the Bhau had more faith in his artillery and he brushed aside the counsel of Holkar as one arising out of defeat and despair. Bhau had planned to attack Abdali in the upper *Doab* and drive a wedge between Delhi and Oudh. But this was foiled by the heavy rains that started that year, brought on floods and cut Delhi off from the *Doah*. About 14 July the Bhau arrived at Agra and on 2nd August stormed Delhi. The easy success of the Marathas caused consternation among enemy ranks and some of the Muslim chieftains opened negotiations with the Bhau. But Najib Khan Rohilla was steadfast in his aim and he would not allow Abdali Sah to negotiate peace unless the Marathas were punished.

Both sides were well balanced and to avoid the arbitration of arms Suja made certain proposals. Bhau not only entertained them but expressed his willingness to appoint Suja *Vazir* at Delhi if he agreed to abandon the Abdali's party. This gave offence to Suraj Mal Jat who had already suggested to be put in possession of the capital and on the next day the Jat contingent left the

Maratha camp. The Rajputs were sitting on the fence and refused to be drawn in the struggle. The Bhau was thus left without a friend in Hindustan.

The big Maratha army had advanced far beyond its base and was finding it difficult to obtain provisions. As the river Yamuna was in spate no early decision of arms could be obtained and Bhau thought of advancing to Kunjpura, a half way house between Sarhind and Koil where the Sah was encamping and cutting off the Sah's line of communications. He marched north, Kunjpura was occupied on 16th October and the Bhau then moved to Kuruksetra to call in Ala Singh Jat and raise the Sikhs.

But before his plans had matured Abdali crossed the Yamuna at Bagpat and set astride the Bhau's communications southward. The Maratha Commander entrenched himself at Panipat and ordered his subordinates in the *Doab* to harass the enemy's rear and prevent supplies reaching him. Here the Abdali's light cavalry proved itself far superior to the Marathas. They seized one by one the Maratha outposts in the *Doab*, made it impossible for Maratha foragers to move out and destroyed Govind Pant Bundela's detachment on 17 December 1760. The Bhau's food supply was exhausted, his horses and gun — cattle were dying of hunger in hundreds and no succour could be expected from any quarter. Life became intolerable in the Maratha camp and it was then decided to move out and attack the enemy. Battle was joined on 14th January; though the Marathas fought well, the cool-headed leadership of Ahmad Sah Abdali won the day. The entire Maratha army was destroyed only a few thousands escaping. All the artillery and camp equipage fell in the enemy's hands.

The battle of Panipat was a turning point in the fortunes of the Marathas and the consequences of the defeat were far-reaching. It stemmed Maratha advance in Hindustan; the Punjab, Bengal and Bihar were permanently lost to the Marathas. The disaster killed the *Pesva* and brought on the scene Raghunath Rav, the most infamous character in Maratha history.



Maharashtra State Gazetteers

## CHAPTER 5\*

### MARATHA POWER

#### (1761—1818)

#### **PESHVA MADHAV RAV.**

THE BATTLE OF PANIPAT IS THE GREAT DIVIDING LINE of Maratha history. “Never was a defeat more complete”, writes Elphinstone, “and never was there a calamity that diffused so much consternation. Grief and despondency spread over the whole Maratha people : all felt the destruction of the army as a death-blow to their national greatness”. “ Most disastrous of all was the blow to the prestige of the Pesva, the one unifying influence in Maratha Government. The weakened power of the Pesva paved the way to English interference in Maratha affairs. Panipat in other words was the prelude to Assaye and Kirkee.”<sup>1</sup>

The consequence of the disaster did not lie concealed from friends or foes alike. For the grand army that Bhau led against the Abdali the Deccan had been denuded of all its best troops. What remained behind were second-line troops and country militia. When the grand army was annihilated Maratha domination in the north was no longer tenable. The northern potentates refused to respect their Maratha masters. The Jats, the Rajputs, the Bundelas, the Rohillas revolted against Maratha rule, seized their outposts and drove out Maratha garrisons. Najib-ud-daula marched on Delhi, took over the administration in his hands; the Rajputs talked of driving the Marathas south of the Narmada. Maratha dominion in the north became aflame with revolts of petty rulers, risings of local militias and disturbances of hill tribes and the next few years witnessed the shrinkage of Maratha frontiers and withdrawing of their rule south of the Cambal.<sup>2</sup>

Balaji Rav was aware of these coming consequences. Reports of revolts in Bundelkhand and Malva had already reached him. He likewise knew that his southern neighbours were watching the struggle in Hindustan with no friendly eye and when therefore the

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\* This Chapter is contributed by Dr. V. G. Dighe.

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge History of India, vol. IV, p. 425.

<sup>2</sup> Marathayancya Itihasaci Sadhane, (Rajwade), I, 285, 288, 293, 297-99; S. P. D., vol. XXIX, pp. 5-50.

news of the disaster at Panipat reached him, the blow dazed him and broke his heart. From Malva he returned to his capital and died mourning for his son and cousin.

### **Nizam Ali's attack on Poona.**

Balaji Rav was succeeded in the *Pesvaship* by his second son, Madhav Rav<sup>1</sup> a young boy of sixteen years. The *Pesvas* brother, Raghunath Rav was now the sole elderly survivor in the family. Void of all qualities of leadership except boundless ambition, mean and selfish, this man of weak and vacillating mind posed now as the saviour of the Maratha cause and tried to seize all authority in his hands. But few around the court had faith in his abilities and everybody suspected his intentions. The *Pesvas* mother, Gopika Bai, a masterful lady resented that her son should be ignored in the conduct of administration and urged him to take his rightful place. When these family dissensions came to be known, the *Nizam's* Court decided to profit by them. Nizam Ali, brother of Salabat Jang, who had attained a predominant position at Hyderabad, occupied the Raicur *Doah* ceded to the *Pesva* last year and marched upon Poona desolating the country and destroying Hindu temples in his line of march. The *Pesva* called to his aid his chiefs and halted the enemy's advance near Uruli within less than one day's march of Poona. Nizam Ali was surrounded and some of his subordinates went over to the Marathas. Raghunath Rav who guided the affairs of his young nephew, came to terms with the *Nizam* by handing over to him territory yielding an annual revenue of twenty-seven lakhs (Jan. 1762). It was suspected that the gesture was meant to win Nizam Ali's friendship in a future contest with the nephew.

### **Battle of Raksasbhuvan.**

In the course of the year Madhav Rav decided to assert his rights. The uncle and the nephew disagreed violently in their march southward after Nizam Ali's discomfiture. Raghoba in resentment resigned his office as regent and retired to Poona. He then came out with a demand for a separate *jagir* worth ten lakhs of rupees and five important fortresses. When this was opposed Raghoba withdrew to the neighbourhood of Nasik, called together his partisans and prepared for war, secretly obtaining the support of Janoji Bhosle and Nizam Ali. The two opposing armies fought a series of actions between 7th and 12th November and Madhav Rav despairing of successful resistance, gave himself up into his uncle's power. Nizam Ali was generously rewarded with a territory yielding an annual revenue of Rs. fifty lakhs including the fort of Daulatabad for the aid given to Raghoba. The terms of the treaty were, however never implemented. The *Pesvas* partisans were removed from office and Raghoba returned to the regency with Sakharam Bapu as his *Divan*. But he was not destined to remain

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<sup>1</sup> The main source for the career of Madhav Rav Pesva is Aitihāsik Lekha Sangraha, vols. 1-4, edited by Khare. These should be supplemented by Selection from Pesva Daftar, vols. 19, 29, 37, and 38 and Persian Calendars, vols. 1-4, Marathyanicya Itihasaci Sadhane, Ed., Rajwade, vols. 1, 12, 13, 14, Hingne Daftar and vol. I, Purandare Daftar.

in power for long. In the attempt to reward his partisans, Raghoba incurred the enmity of the Patvardhans, the *Pratinidhi* and other Maratha chieftains. The *Nizam* whose appetite had been whetted by easy gains of his earlier alliance decided again to fish in troubled waters. His *Divan* Vitthal Sundar invited the disgruntled Maratha element to join his master the *Nizam* and with this formidable accession he denounced the former treaties and gave out his intention of subverting the *Pesva's* regency by that of Janoji Bhosle ; he peremptorily called on the *Pesva* to deliver all territory east of the Bhima and accept his advisers in the ministry. The *Nizam* sacked Poona in May 1763. The *Nizam's* interference in Maratha affairs temporarily closed the rift between uncle and nephew. Acting on the advice of Malhar Rav Holkar, a Maratha army ravaged the *Nizam's* territory while, Maratha diplomacy lured back his new Maratha allies. As the Moghal army was crossing the Godavari in its march towards Aurangabad, it was attacked and decisively defeated at Raksasbhuvan (10th August 1763). Young Madhav Rav was chiefly instrumental in securing this signal victory and the result was that he soon took the reins of administration in his hands and retained them for the next nine years of his career. Nizam Ali threw the blames of his late errors on Vitthal Sundar and implored pardon. He gave up his vaunted claims, confirmed cessions made at Udgir in 1760 and added to them territory worth twenty-two lakhs. The treaty remained in operation for the next thirty-two years. The brilliant victory won by the *Pesva* went a long way in restoring Maratha prestige.

### **Haidar-Maratha contest.**

The next problem the *Pesva* had to grapple with was the advance of Haidar Ali of Mysore in the south Maratha country. Haidar to start with was a petty officer in Mysore infantry. But his organizing capacity, his military discipline, his daring and his genius for intrigue brought him to the notice of Nanjraj, the Mysore Commander, and in 1755 he became the governor of Dindigal. In 1759 he actively opposed Maratha advance in Mysore and wrested back the territory ceded a year earlier. By 1761 Haidar Ali became the head of the administration and seized supreme authority. As Maratha power waned, Haider Ali's grew in proportion. He occupied old Maratha territory in Karnatak, forced the *Navabs* and Hindu chieftains to pay him tribute, and conquered the kingdoms of Gooty and Bednore; in 1763 Maratha districts north of the Tungabhadra were overrun, Dharvar was captured and Haidar now menaced the entire Maratha country south of the Krsna. There was no choice for the *Pesva* but to fight back this threat on his southern frontier. Haidar Ali however was too powerful a foe to be checked by the *Pesva's* subordinate feudatories and for the next eight years the *Pesva's* entire resources were directed to reduce if not exterminate Haidar's power. The fighting became bitter on account of the novel method pursued by the Mysore ruler. He knew that his small force was no match for the numerous Maratha horse and he would not venture out in the open. Sheltering behind the woods in the western ghats, his infantry sallied forth at night to surprise



the enemy. Madhav Rav *Pesva* met Haidar's wives with great skill and tenacity and wore him out. While one Maratha force would keep Haidar Ali immobilized, another would devastate the country, stop supplies reaching the enemy's camp and thus force him out of his wooded defences. At the end of eight years campaigning Haidar had lost half his kingdom and held the remaining half in fee to the *Pesva*.

The first Haidar-Maratha campaign lasted from April 1764 to March 1765. Dharvar was besieged and there was severe fighting at Rattehalli, Jadi Anavadi and Bednore in which Haidar was decisively beaten. He agreed to pay a tribute of thirty-two lakhs, restored to Murar Rav Ghorpade the fortress of Gooty and the surrounding districts and gave up all claims on Savanur.

The offensive against Haidar Ali was resumed towards the close of 1766. A strong army invaded Haidar's north-eastern districts took Sira, Hoskot and Madgiri and forced him to surrender all previous Maratha conquests in Karnatak. But immediately the *Pesva's* back was turned, Haidar resumed the territory he had granted by treaty, intrigued with the *Pesvas* domestic rivals and withheld the amount of the tribute due from him. The next two years the *Pesva* spent in settling with his uncle and Janoji Bhosle, but he again invaded Mysore in 1770, laid waste Haidar's northwestern territory and advanced as far as Bangalore. Haidar clung to the forest belt of the western ghats, contending himself with destroying stray Maratha detachments. The Maratha army overran Guramkonda and Kolar districts and succeeded in reducing Bhairavdurg, Nandidurg, Kolar, Mulbagal and Nijgal. But the *Pesva* could not press operations on account of failing health. In the next season Trimbak Rav Pethe who had taken the *Pesvas* place kept an army in the Mysore plains, surprised Haidar Ali at Cinkurali or Moti Talav (near Srirahgpattam) and dispersed his force to four winds taking all its artillery and equipment. Peace was not concluded till 1772 July, the intervening period being marked with minor operations of devastating character. Haidar at last agreed to surrender all Sivaji's former conquests in Karnatak (Sira, Hoskot, Balapur and Kolar) as also Guramkonda and to pay fifty lakhs in indemnity. Mysore was reduced to half its overgrown size. But on account of the death of the *Pesva* in November and the commotions that followed these gains proved only temporary and Haidar was on the march once more.

### **North Indian politics.**

We must now turn to affairs at Delhi. The defeat at Panipat left the Marathas in total eclipse in that quarter for some time. But no other power stepped in to assume the imperial role. Abdali who could have easily done so, limited his views to the possession of the Punjab and even this he could not retain long on account of Sikh opposition. The mounting Sikh pressure also made the situation of Najib Khan, Abdali's nominee at Delhi, insecure. The Jats—the peasantry of the Agra province—under their able rulers

Suraj Mal and Javahir Singh extended their rule as far north as Delhi and left Najib in control of only a small tract round the capital. The English in the meanwhile had won the battle of Plassey and Buxar, obtained the *Divani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and with Suja-ud-daula as their subordinate ally, their frontiers now marched along the east bank of the Ganga. Madho Singh of Jaipur organized a Rajput confederacy against the Marathas and attempted to oust them from Malwa, but after his defeat at Mangrol (1762) he relapsed into his usual somnolence. An expedition under Raghunath Rao sent in 1766 could achieve little for want of energy in the leader and discipline among his troops and failed even to curb the Rana of Gohad. In 1769, after having reduced his domestic enemies to submission the *Peswa* thought of rectifying Maratha position in the North. He despatched his forces to Hindustan under Ramcandra Ganes and Visaji Krsna who were later joined by Mahadji Sinde and Tukoji Holkar. These chiefs were asked to call to account the Jats, the Rohillas and others who had seized Maratha conquests in Hindustan, restore the Emperor to his ancestral throne and regulate the imperial affairs in his name. In a great battle fought at Govardhan on 5th April 1770, the Jat king was defeated and his districts across the Yamuna were overrun. Najib Khan who was playing his usual game of duplicity tried to form a Jat—Rohilla alliance but his plans were discovered. Peace was granted to the Jat Raja (September 1770) on his 'surrender of Maratha districts in the *Doab* and on agreeing to pay sixty-five lakhs of rupees for arrears of tribute. The army then attacked the Rohilla chiefs. The districts of Etava, Sukohabad and Kanoj were ravaged and the fort of Etava was seized. Hafiz Rahmat and Ahmad Khan Bangas then submitted and made peace (January 1771).

### **Return of Saha Alam to capital.**

In the meanwhile Najib Khan, the arch-enemy of the Marathas, died on 31 October 1770 and it was decided to push towards the main objective of the campaign. Delhi was stormed in February 1771 and Sah Alam who had remained in exile for twelve years returned to the capital under Maratha protection (Jan. 1772). The Marathas then resumed the offensive against the Rohilla country. Timely death saved Najib from vengeance but others could not escape so lightly. His son Zabeta Khan was called upon to pay the customary *nazarana* on succession and settle the accounts of the crown-lands held by him. On his refusal the Maratha army headed by the Emperor marched into Rohilkhand dispersed Zabeta Khan's levies in a great battle at Candi Ghat. Najibabad the fortress which Najib had built for depositing his treasure, was razed to the ground. The Maratha forces then spread all over the country exacting tribute from places large and small.

The Maratha chiefs had the satisfaction of avenging their defeat at Panipat and wiping out the disgrace of the disaster. But further operations were marred by serious differences among them. Sinde

and Holkar held divergent views on practically every issue and Ramcandraa Ganes was unable to decide between them. He was recalled by the *Pesva* and Visaji Krsna took his place. The English and Suja-ud-daula began inciting the Emperor and other Hindustani chiefs not to yield to Maratha demands. The *Pesva's* health was failing and he was in no frame of mind to watch his subordinates and direct their activities. Sinda and Holkar who had differed violently on every detail of policy, would not consent to act together. Sinda parted company and marched away to Jaipur. Visaji Krsna and Tukoji Holkar sent minatory messages to Suja-ud-daula for his perfidious conduct in the late negotiations and threatened to invade his country. Suja, relying on English support, refused to knuckle under the threats and forced the Marathas to give up the struggle. The *Pesvas* Government distracted at home could not sustain its army in the north and Visaji Krsna retired to the Deccan in 1774. The flood waters of Maratha invasion subsided leaving the banks high and dry.

### **Death of Madhav Rav and consequences.**

*Pesva* Madhav Rav died on 18th November 1772. A man of fine character he had a high conception of his duties as a ruler and did much to protect the weak against the strong, exterminate corruption in the State and hold the rule of the law. Under his resolute leadership Maratha power showed considerable buoyancy. His entire career was spent in resisting the encroachments of the *Nizam* and of Haidar Ali and quelling the revolt of his uncle and he had little time to attend in person to the affairs of Hindustan. His authority over the great feudatories suffered a steady decline in consequence. These chieftains assumed a degree of independence in their dealings and followed policies which often were in marked divergence to those of the central government. Had the young *Pesva* lived longer he might have succeeded in subduing his chiefs to their former dependence, but his premature death removed the possibility of restraining the growing disruption

### **ANGLO-MARATHA CONFLICT.**

This disunion in Maratha politics becomes all the more glaring in the period from 1772 to 1802. After 1772, the most important event was the murder of *Pesva* Narayan Rav who had succeeded Madhav Rav and the first Anglo-Maratha conflict arising out of it. Madhav Rav on his death-bed made an appeal to his uncle to avoid family dissensions and be reconciled to his young nephew Narayan Rav, But the appeal fell on deaf ears. Age had not withered Raghoba's keenness about the *Pesvaship* and the harsh treatment meted out to him by the new *Pesva* was not calculated to make him submissive. A conspiracy was formed by Raghoba's partisans to release their patron from his confinement in the *Pesvas* palace and put him on the *Gadi*. On 30th August (1773), the infantry Guards (*Gardis*) surrounded the palace demanding their arrears, broke into the *Pesvas* chamber and cut him

up as he was imploring his uncle to save his life. Raghoba was privy to the secret design of seizing his nephew but denied complicity in his murder. The horrid act was however universally detested and roused against him popular resentment which expressed itself in the formation of the League of the *Barbhais*. The chief men at the *Pesvas* Court, Sakharam Bapu Bokil, Trimbak Rav Pethe, Nana Phadnis and others banded themselves into a confederacy to frustrate Raghoba's ambition. By the end of the year the plot was ripe and the confederates raised the standard of revolt declaring Raghoba a murderer and usurper and calling upon all to withhold co-operation from him. Raghoba soon became a fugitive and in a desperate moment turned to the English of Bombay for armed aid to recover his *Pesvaship*. The Bombay Government, happy at the idea of extending its territory and of subordinating the Maratha power to its own, immediately acceded, sent its own army to beat ministerial opposition and reinstate its ally in authority. Thus began the first Anglo-Maratha War which was fought with bitterness on both sides and which strained the resources of both. It is not necessary to follow in detail the fortunes of the struggle as the same have been described in another chapter of this book. The Maratha State emerged from the struggle bruised but not broken and the treaty of Salbye concluded in May 1782, gave it a respite of twenty years to put its own house in order.

#### CHANGE IN MARATHA CONSTITUTION.

For the Marathas the permanent results of the war were anything but favourable. The eight years' warfare drained the *Pesvas* treasury as never before. The huge debts incurred by the ministry for war expenses threatened the Poona Court with bankruptcy. The minority of the *Pesva* and the difficulties that surrounded him on all sides encouraged the feudatories to affect greater freedom. They began managing their *Jagirs* as independent states owing but nominal allegiance to the *Pesva*. Sinde, Holkar, Bhosle, Gaikwad though parts of an organic structure became in practice separate entities and each began to drift as he thought best. The disaster of Panipat administered the first serious blow to the *Pesvas* unifying authority. Raghoba's rivalry for the *Pesvaship*, his revolt, the consequent civil war developing in the Anglo-Maratha Conflict hastened the process of dissolution. After 1782, though the *Pesvas* ceremonial pre-cedence over his feudatories continued as before, he had little control over their internal affairs. His authority came to be limited fit the provinces, directly held by him. The feudatories carried out his mandate or defied them as it suited their interests. The feudal tendency among the Marathas that had raised its head after Sivaji's death gathered momentum making the structure weak and vulnerable.

#### NANA-MAHADJI DIFFERENCES.

The Council of the *Barbhais* which at the beginning was formed to carry on the struggle against the usurper also underwent a change. Some of the members died in the interval of war, some

went over to the enemy and some who faltered found themselves behind iron bars. Nana Phadnis alone remained steadfast in his loyalty and his objective ; with great patience, diplomatic skill and organizing capacity he had won the war and in the minority of the *Pesva* came to occupy the first position in the Maratha State. The war likewise brought to the forefront Mahadji Sinde and enhanced his reputation as a great military leader. He had retired to Hindustan in the beginning of 1781, with the army, successfully fought back the British advance into Malva and concluded the treaty of Salbye which placed him in the position of a mediator between the Maratha State and the East India Company and added to his prestige. The policies of the Maratha State came to be determined by Nana Phadnis in the south and Sinde in the North, both patriotic and firm in their loyalty to a common master, but working practically independent of each other. Both realized that the English were now their rivals for the sovereignty of India and their efforts must be directed to resist British aggression. Nana's plan for this was to reduce the great Maratha feudatories to a rigid subordination to the power of the *Pesva* and then bring the neighbouring powers of Hyderabad and Mysore into a subsidiary alliance with the Maratha State to make a united stand against British advance. His attention was always rivetted on Poona and the home country.<sup>1</sup>

Sinde's mind worked in a different way. He had witnessed the advance of the English from Calcutta to Kanoj within less than a quarter of a century. They were rushing in to fill the vacuum caused by the Maratha eclipse at Panipat. Mahadji felt that unless the English were halted, they would obtain control over Delhi affairs and endanger the entire fabric of Maratha power. North India as the centre of political gravity was to him more important than Deccan and he refused to subscribe to Nana's views and play a subordinate role to the Poona minister. The new army organized by him under the command of De Boigne enabled him to take control of imperial affairs and made him the executive head of Hindustan. His new army was distrusted and his imperial designs instead of being looked as fulfilment of Maratha objective, were viewed with alarm by the Poona Ministry. They saw in them nothing but Sinde's attempt at self-aggrandisement.<sup>2</sup> His rapid and growing successes in Hindustan roused Nana's jealousy; the decade following the treaty of Salbye is thus marked by a factious spirit between the two Maratha leaders which unconsciously damaged Maratha power and prestige.

#### **RECOVERY IN DECCAN.**

The tide of British invasion had been turned back, but in the interregnum of the war large parts of Maratha territory had been seized by the neighbouring states of Hyderabad and Mysore. Nana Phadnis

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<sup>1</sup> Poona Residency Correspondence Series, vol. II, pp. 167-68.

<sup>2</sup> P. R. C. Series, vol. I, p. 374 , P. R. C, vol. II, pp. 340-347.



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now turned his diplomatic talents to the recovery of these districts. The Mysore ruler was the stronger of the two of the troublesome neighbours. He claimed these districts as the price of joining the alliance against the British and was incensed with the double dealing of the Maratha State when it concluded the treaty of Salbye without his acquiescence and he defied article 9 in the treaty which attempted to coerce him into peace. Haidar Ali died in December 1782, but his son Tipu Sultan pursued hostilities against the British with a degree of success and in 1784, March concluded peace at Mangalore, without Maratha intervention. His success in war and diplomacy made Tipu look on the Marathas with great contempt and he thirsted to punish them for their treachery. When he found a Maratha army advancing against him under Haripant Phadke, he ravaged the Raicur *Doab*. Tipu's warlike activities and threats drew the Governments of Poona and Hyderabad closer. Nana Phadnis met the *Nizam* at Yadgir on 6th May 1784<sup>1</sup> and decided to prosecute joint measures against Mysore. Tipu's reaction to the pact was swift and decisive. He called on the *Nizam* to acknowledge himself as his vassal and cede to him the district of Bijapur. Nargund and Kittur, two Hindu states which enjoyed the special protection of the *Pesva* were overrun, the families of the chiefs were taken into captivity and treated with great harshness. Nana's hands were forced and a Maratha army took the field against Tipu (March 1786). Badami and Gajendragad were reduced, but Tipu severely handled Haripant Phadke and the Patvardhans in several engagements and exposed the weakness of the Maratha army and its outworn tactics. He captured Adoni from the *Nizam* by a swift stroke and then turning upon Savanur reduced it in the teeth of strongest Maratha opposition. He seduced Tukoji Holkar and other Maratha Chiefs with large bribes and Nana was glad to end hostilities in 1787, when Tipu agreed to pay arrears of tribute and cede Badami, Nargund and Kittur. A British Resident had arrived in the *Pesva's* Court and the British army was being put in a state of preparedness. Tipu suspected the English becoming more friendly with the Marathas and to avoid isolation granted the Poona Court favourable terms.

Tipu's fears proved but too true. Lord Cornwallis, who had arrived in India in 1786 to take charge of Company's affairs, had declared his intentions of eschewing all schemes of conquest or engagements with native rulers. But Tipu's restless ambition, his embassies to Constantinople and Paris in 1787, his military activities confirmed the English in their attitude of vigilant suspicion. The British Residents at Hyderabad and Poona were instructed to start negotiations for an alliance directed against Tipu. Nana Phadnis after much deliberation joined the alliance in the hope that the two antagonists (Tipu and the British), would exhaust them-selves in mutual destruction and that the Marathas would become

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<sup>1</sup> For the treaty, see *P. R. C.*, vol. IV, Appendix I.

arbiters of future negotiations.<sup>1</sup> Two Maratha forces, one under Haripant Phadke and another under Parasuram Bhau Patvardhan, cooperated and contributed materially to the success of the operations. Tipu was brought to bay before Srirangpattam in March 1792. Half of his kingdom was partitioned among the allies and a large indemnity was levied on him. But the outcome of the campaign was far from what the Poona minister anticipated. The Marathas instead of being arbiters came to occupy a secondary place and lost the initiative to the British.<sup>2</sup>

### **SHINDE'S REGENCY.<sup>3</sup>**

While Nana Phadnis was consolidating Maratha power in the Deccan, Mahadji Sinda was following a similar course in Hindustan. Since the ratifications of the treaty of Salbye he had secured considerable advantages. Gwalior and Gohad had surrendered and as a result several of the minor chiefs returned to their allegiance as Maratha tributaries. Sinda, while prosecuting these objects was watching the confusions and contentions in the imperial territory. Mirza Najaf who held the regency after Maratha departure from Delhi in 1773, died in 1782 and the Emperor's affairs fell in a state of utmost disorder. Sah Alam himself was an amiable person, but, altogether weak and incapable of conducting his own affairs or of restraining his subordinates. The four lieutenants of Mirza Najaf Khan quarrelled violently among themselves about the executive authority. Mirza Safi and Afrasiyab were murdered by their rivals and the King invited Sinda to undertake the regency of his house and regulate his affairs. Major Brown, the Governor-General's special envoy, was in Delhi, since the end of 1783, plotting against the Marathas and "working desperately to revive Hastings' abandoned plan of turning the Emperor into an English puppet", and Sinda by refusing would have played into the hands of his enemies. He therefore, met the Emperor on 15th November (1784), and assuming the robes of his new office, became the power behind the imperial throne.

But Sinda's new office was not a bed of roses. The king was a cipher; his kingdom was parcelled one among a number of turbulent Moghal chiefs who owned but a nominal allegiance to the throne; the Sikhs were ravaging imperial domains on the north; the Rajput princes had for years ceased to pay any tribute. The first task of the new *Vazir* was to reduce these refractory chiefs to obedience and for this he needed a large army and vast resources. Nana Phadnis, though he always pressed on Sinda the necessity of getting control of imperial affairs, could never spare funds for the schemes, he advocated. Mahadji perforce turned to raise money

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<sup>1</sup> P. R. C, II, pp. 202, 222 ; P. R. C, III, Intro., p. vi and P. 511.

<sup>2</sup> P. R. C, vol. p. 341, Shore's reflections on the political state of India.

<sup>3</sup> For this subject primary sources are *Mahadji Sindhia's Hisit Paper*, edited by Sardesai, *Poona Res, Correspondence*, Series, Vol. I ; also *Persian Records of ;Maratha History*, vol. I, Ed. Jadunath Sarkar.

from his new acquisitions. He called on the Moghal feudatory chieftains to account for their holdings, dispossessed not a few of them and imposed heavy fines on the rest. The Rajput princes who had for years paid not a pie into the imperial treasury, were asked to pay the arrears of their tribute and of the Maratha *Cauth*. These heavy demands and the hatred, the Moghal and Rajput chiefs felt for the Marathas, incited them to revolt and united them in a grand conspiracy against Sinde. The ten years of Sinde's Regency at Delhi thus became a long drawn story of war punctuated by short interludes of peace.

The war with Rajput princes began in 1786, when Jaipur declined to pay tribute demanded of her. In 1787, Sinde invaded Rajputana personally but suffered a heavy reverse at Lalsot by the defection of his Hindustani battalions. Everything presaged total ruin and a second Panipat for the Maratha army when the day was saved by the cool intrepidity of the leader. With great skill Mahadji Sinde withdrew the remnant of his army to Dig and later southward to the Cambal. Here Sinde once more regrouped his forces, led them to battle and defeated the Moghal chiefs near Agra. He was once more the master of Delhi, receiving overtures of abject surrender from the Rajput Chiefs. He looked to a period of tranquillity in which to consolidate the gains of his victory. But the jealousy of Tukoji Holkar, ostensibly despatched by the Poona ministry to support Sinde's authority, but in reality to weaken it, 'encouraged Sinde's enemies; the embers of war once more flared up and Sinde's new army formed by De Boigne had to take field against the Rajputs. The Jaipur force was disposed of at Patan (June 1790), and that of Jodhpur at Merta (September 1790). Mahadji then marched to the Deccan in 1792 to settle issues with the Poona ministers. In his absence Holkar openly conspired with his enemies but was decisively beaten at Lakheri in 1793, by Sinde's forces.

#### **SHINDE'S TRIUMPH AT POONA.**

Sinde arrived in the Deccan in June 1792. Wildest rumours and conjectures were afloat about his intentions in visiting the home country after an absence of twelve years. He was now the highest functionary of the Emperor and was at the head of a powerful army and it was felt that he would claim the same position at Poona as he held at Delhi. The Poona minister apprehending a contest went to the length of asking military aid from the English which of course the Governor-General declined.<sup>1</sup> Sinde's armies were winning victories over his enemies but the intrigues of Ali Bahadur and Tukoji Holkar and a host of other minions of Nana Phadnis were nullifying their effects and Sinde wanted a clear mandate from the *Pesva* about his authority in Hindustan<sup>2</sup>. But the *Pesva* himself was under strict surveillance of the minister and almost a prisoner in his palace.

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<sup>1</sup> *P. R. C*, vol. II, pp. 229-230.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

Before he could exercise his independent judgement he had to be liberated from ministerial thralldom. Mahadji arrived in Poona on 12th June; ten days later at a great ceremonial *darbar* he delivered to the *Pesva* the titles and honours brought for him from the Emperor and the *farman* prohibiting cow-slaughter throughout India.<sup>1</sup> The formal functions were a prelude to an intimate intercourse that developed between the *Pesva* and the Maratha warrior. Sinde's frank manner, open speech and cordiality were in marked contrast to the reserve and coldness of Nana Phadnis and young Madhav Rav came to cultivate a liking for the soldierly Maratha. Nana Phadnis felt jealous of the growing influence of Sinde and talked of retiring. There were charges and counter-charges and hot debates and Sinde exposed in open *Darbar* the high handedness of the minister in conducting the administration, his failure to understand popular grievances and the general atmosphere of suspicion prevailing in Poona.<sup>2</sup> At last after the action of Lakheri had put the seal of victory Sinde's armies, the Poona minister could no longer hold out against him and yielded almost on all points. 'His accounts were signed by the *Pesva* acknowledging a balance of five crores of rupees as ready cash, could not be obtained from the Poona ministry, Sinde accepted a transfer of the *Pesva's* share of the conquests in Hindustan. It was also agreed that Sinde should have the sole management of affairs in that quarter and the *Pesva's* Government should furnish him with such troops as he may require for his future operations'

Sinde did not live long to enjoy the fruits of his victory. He died of a malignant fever on 12th February 1794 and was succeeded by his nephew Daulat Rav, who was then about 14 years old. The circumstances of his having ended his career in Poona for some time brought his Government completely within the influence of the paramount power and Nana Phadnis used the occasion to exact long standing demands from the *Nizam*.

Sinde's achievements were hailed by his contemporaries as great victories and as fulfilling the long standing Maratha ambition of dominating the Indian scene. It was one of the cherished objectives of Maratha policy to obtain control over affairs at Delhi by exercising the executive authority of the Emperor. Baji Rav in 1736 and his son Balaji in 1752 agreed to defend the Empire against aggression on the same condition. In 1771, the Marathas had once more turned their face towards Delhi and had restored the capital to the fugitive monarch. But before they could settle down they had to abandon the venture and retire to Poona. Mahadji became the Vice-regent in 1784 and successfully maintained that position against heavy odds, thus fulfilling the principal objective of Maratha policy

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<sup>1</sup> P. R. C, vol. II, p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 253-254, 258, 261-263, 275-292.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

pursued over half a century. But it is doubtful if his successes brought stability to the Maratha power or increased its security. The Moghal nobility remained sullenly hostile; the Rajput chiefs were completely alienated. If Nana Phadnis had co-operated with Sinda, things might have shaped differently.

### EUROPEAN MILITARY SYSTEM.

Mahadji owed his success in a large degree to the adoption of the European military system in which he was aided by a very competent French soldier Count De Boigne. The new system demonstrated its superiority over the indigenous method of fighting in a hundred clashes since the French routed the *Namb* of Arcot at Ambur, in 1749. The dazzling successes of Dupleix and Bussy against overwhelming odds made native rulers fall for the new method of warfare. Trained armies under European officers became the craze of the day. The brilliant success of Bussy in 1751, of Hartley and Goddard in the Anglo-Maratha conflict and of Tipu Sultan in 1756 brought home to the Marathas the ineffectiveness of the forays of their light cavalry. The Maratha horse was powerless against compact armies or walled posts equipped with artillery. When other powers were employing trained battalions as the hardening core of their armies, it was inevitable for the Marathas to follow suit. Mahadji Sinda at the time of shouldering imperial responsibilities, made up his mind to adopt the new system and introduced radical changes in his army. In De Boigne he found a Commander of 'superior knowledge, varied experience and lofty character'. De Boigne raised for Sinda three brigades between 1784-1792, equipped them with modern arms cast in the foundries at Agra and Aligarh and won a series of remarkable successes. Unfortunately the common Maratha soldier showed little inclination to take to the new method of warfare and large numbers of Hindustani soldiers came to be recruited for Sinda's '*Campooos*'. The Maratha officers likewise were too ignorant to lead the battalions and the new army developed the fatal weakness of being recruited from foreign elements and commanded by foreign adventurers. It is dangerous for a country to depend on foreigners for its defence. For the European soldier in native armies the only attachment to service was the fortune he made out of it. When these battalions therefore faced the British army in 1803, they were destroyed quickly and there was nothing left for the chiefs except capitulation.<sup>1</sup>

### MARATHA TRIUMPH—BATTLE OF KHARDA.

Though few of his contemporaries realized it, the death of Mahadji Sinda was the beginning of the dissolution of the Maratha confederacy. This was concealed from common view by the signal victory won by Maratha arms over the Nizam at Khanda in March 1795—the last occasion when all Maratha Chiefs acted in concert under the *Peshwa* authority.

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<sup>1</sup> For a fuller discussion, see '*Fall of the Mughal Empire*', vol. IV, pp. 102-116.



Unlike that of the Marathas the, *Nizam's* authority was never rooted in the soil. Since its foundation in 1724, it was in competition with that of the Marathas and had been reduced to a position of subordination in the course of half a century. Large parts of the Deccan *Subha* had been surrendered to the *Pesva* and over the remaining lay the perpetual spectre of Maratha *Cauth* and *Sardesmukhi*. The *Nizam* however took advantage of the civil war in the Maratha State, since 1774 and withheld Maratha tribute. Even after the conclusion of peace in 1782, the Poona Court did not dare press for arrears of its claims for fear of losing the *Nizam's* friendship against the menacing advance of Tipu Sultan. Tipu's power was however broken in 1792 and half his kingdom was partitioned among the allies. The amity that had marked for a time the relations between the two neighbouring powers of Poona and Hyderabad disappeared with the disappearance of the menace endangering their existence. The dormant claims of the Poona Court were again revived and brought forward for accommodation.

The *Nizam* in the meanwhile had come to lean heavily on the British and in his expectation of drawing on their support in the last resort he defied Maratha claims with impunity. At the time of ceding Guntoor district in 1788 and again in 1790, when joining the alliance against Tipu, he had shown himself anxious for the Company's protection. At the end of the Mysore war in 1792, before the allied armies parted at Bangalore, there were talks of perpetuating the alliance and thereby securing their defence against the faithless Tipu. These talks gave rise to the much discussed but abortive treaty of guarantee. The *Nizam* saw in the guarantee treaty the opportunity of saving his independence from the Marathas as well. The Poona Government was however, alarmed at the growing friendliness between the English, its rival and the *Nizam*, its tributary and dependent, whose councils, it had influenced over a long period and who had now turned to another direction for guidance. It looked on the proposed engagement as "a shield held between it and its dependent the *Nizam*" and peremptorily rejected it.<sup>1</sup>

The protracted discussion of the guarantee proposals was not the only occasion when the *Nizam's* designs were exposed. They were disclosed on many others, guide's visit to Poona in 1792, offered the *Nizam* one such occasion to embarrass the Poona authorities and flout their long standing claims. It was felt that the serious differences of Sinde with Nana Phadnis were beyond adjustment and would lead to cleavage and revolution and the *Nizam's* minister Azam-ul-Umra decided to handle it as a lever for his own ends. He entered into secret correspondence with Sinde, bribed him with money to fan his rivalry with the Poona ministry and in support of his designs began a threatening move in the direction of Poona. Sinde made a dupe of

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<sup>1</sup> For dissensions of the *Treaty of Guarantee*. See *P. R. C*, vol. IV, pp. 1-72.

Azam-ul-Umra and nothing came out of this move. Nana Phadnis thought that the time for an amicable settlement was past and pressed the *Nizam* with his demands about long standing arrears.

About this time occurred the death of Mahadji Sinde, which temporarily placed the vast military resources of his Government at the disposal of the Poona minister. Holkar was shaken by his defeat at Lakheri and was completely subservient to Nana. The Bhosle of Nagpur had been estranged by Azam-ul-Umra's arrogant behaviour in withholding his share of revenue from Berar. Towards Nana, Azam-ul-Umra had been indiscreet enough to use discourteous language unbecoming in a minister. Tipu had nothing but contempt for the minister who had cemented friendship with his sworn enemy the English and he now watched his ruin with jubilation.

The *Nizam* to the last hoped for British intervention and would not think of accommodating his differences with the Marathas. Sir John Shore, who was then at the head of the Company's affairs 'refused to depart from justice and good faith and give assistance'. He understood that the revival of its old claims was the thin end of the wedge by which the Poona Government sought to dominate the *Nizam's* Councils which would react unfavourably on the amity existing between the *Nizam* and the Company. To have countenanced openly the *Nizam's* rejection of the Poona demands would have meant declaration of hostilities with the Maratha confederacy, and to this length the Governor-General was not prepared to go at a time when the confederacy appeared almost irresistible and when Tipu smarting under his defeat was nursing thoughts of revenge. He also could not afford to forget the alarming situation in Europe where England was involved in a mighty struggle with revolutionary France, which precluded any hope of getting substantial reinforcements from home. The *Nizam* was a weakling and offered little advantage to Company as an ally. Thus circumstanced, the Governor-General was unwilling to risk an immediate war in anticipation of future dangers likely to result from Maratha aggrandisement at the cost of the *Nizam*. He chose to follow the policy of strict non-intervention and advised the *Nizam* to liquidate Maratha demands by a fair accommodation. The Governor-General pertinently observed, "When we reflect on the vices and imbecility of the *Nizam's* administration, the impossibility of directing his politics without usurping his government and the dangers of perpetual war, the consequence of such interference, when we consider the difficulty of making any effectual impression on the Maratha State by our forces, the comparative facility with which they might injure us, the magnitude of their resources and exertions, as well as the number of troops, both native and European, which would be required to oppose the united efforts of the Marathas and

Tipu, and the inevitable ruin of a long protracted war the inducement to support the *Nizam* at the hazard of such impending circumstances ought to be much stronger than the apprehension of future evils from the subversion of his power.<sup>1</sup>

The *Pesva* went into tents after the Dasara on 26th December 1794. He gathered round his standard for the last time almost all the principal feudatories of the empire. The two armies drew near each other in the vicinity of Kharda, when the *Nizam* committed a tactical blunder. In seeking to march his army to the protection of the fort of Parenda, he made a flanking movement in face of the enemy's advance. His right flank was attacked by the Maratha horse under Parasuram Bhau and Sinda's battalions on 11th March. Instead of keeping his ground, the *Nizam* in a moment of weakness retired to the fort of Kharda for shelter. This act proved his undoing. Scared by the cannonade of Sinda's guns, his troops fled away under cover of darkness of the night. The next morning the Maratha army besieged the fort, which was insignificant and ill-equipped to stand a siege. After protracted negotiations, the *Nizam* made an abject surrender and submitted to a humiliating peace.

Nothing could have been more advantageous to the Marathas than the treaty signed on 10th April 1795. It confirmed the demands of the Poona Court, secured to it territory worth 33 lakhs of rupees annually, and promised it three crores in indemnity. The Minister who was the main cause of the hostility was likewise delivered to the Maratha Government.<sup>2</sup>

#### **DEATH OF SAVAI MADHAV RAV AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.**

The victory of Kharda proved 'a dead sea fruit' as the terms of the treaty were never fulfilled by the *Nizam* and the Maratha empire was soon convulsed by internal troubles arising from the death of Savai Madhav Rav. The young *Pesva* was a delicate youth brought up under strict tutelage of the minister. He was now twenty-one years of age, yet was denied any share in the administration. He chafed at the restraints placed on him and entered into correspondence with Raghoba's sons, his only surviving kith and kin but held as prisoner at Junnar. This was intercepted by the minister who upbraided his young ward for the folly of communicating with his enemies. The young *Pesva* felt deeply mortified at the reproof given him, developed a melancholy temper and in a mood of despondency threw himself down the balcony of his palace on 25th October; two days later he died.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix in "*Our Faithful Ally the Nizam*", by Hastings Fraser.

<sup>2</sup> An amount of literature exists about the Kharda campaign. There are ballads, and Bakhars, dispatches in Marathi in Vol. VII of Rajwade and Vol. IX of Khare, The best material will be found in Vol. IV and II of '*Poona Residency Correspondence Series*'.

Death is always tragic, but nothing could compare with the tragedy that now overcame the Maratha empire. Nana Phadnis had piloted the state for over two decades, had gathered all powers of the *Pesvaship* in his own hands as the guardian of a minor; with the death of the *Pesva* his custodianship and with it the regency came to an end. By irony of fate the rightful successor to the *Masnad* was Baji Rav, son of Raghunath Rav, the sworn enemy of the minister and his succession Nana now tried to prevent by all the means of which he was master. He was foiled in this by popular sentiment which favoured the cause of Baji Rav, by the superior, intrigues of the young man and by the hostility of Sinde's Senvi minister whom Nana was unwise enough to provoke. But Nana refused to acknowledge defeat and quit the scene; he insisted on clinging to the post when no longer wanted and in the resulting contest dragged down not only his own reputation for wisdom and sanity but the splendid fabric of the Maratha State of which he was the last architect. In his attempt to retain his position he was involved in a maze of intrigues and conspiracies which created disorder and anarchy all over Maharashtra and amidst the rivalry of contending parties and clash of arms the British stepped in and put an end to Maratha independence.<sup>1</sup>

Aware of the repugnance of Raghoba's son towards him and the consequent annihilation of his powers in the event of the latter's succession, the minister toyed with the idea of adoption of a collateral member of the *Pesvas* family by the widow of the dead *Pesva* and ruling in his name. But the move was not popular and despite the great reputation of the minister, could gather few adherents to support it. A number of infants were brought from Konkan but none apparently was approved. In the meanwhile Baji Rav from Junnar had contacted the British Resident and Daulat Rav Sinde and was soliciting their aid for his succession. The British Resident could not commit himself, but Sinde offered his support on condition of his receiving one crore of rupees in cash and a *jagir* worth Rupees twenty-five lakhs. The agreement soon reached the ears of Nana; rather than allow Baji Rav to fall into the hands of Daulat Rav, he decided on his release himself. He despatched Parasuram Bhau to bring him to Poona, waited on him on his arrival and both agreed to forget past enmities and carry on the administration in mutual trust.

The *Pesva*, however, had clearly gone back on his agreement with Sinde and Sinde's ministers were incensed at Nana's attempt to defeat their scheme of controlling the *Pesvaship*. Baloba Tatyā now induced his master to march to Poona to control the affairs there. Nana knew his inability to oppose Sinde's trained battalions and was alarmed for his own safety. Though assured by Sinde's ministers that he would be safe provided the promised subsidy were paid and

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<sup>1</sup> P. R. C, Vol. II, pp. 395-440.

territory ceded, Nana left the capital on 21st March (1796) and by way of Satara, Wai and Rayagad fled to Mahad. Three days after the Minister's flight Sinda arrived at Poona and asked Bajirao to fulfil his promise. Bajirao had neither the will nor the means to do so. He tried to wriggle out of the agreement by pointing Sinda's failure to keep his side of the obligations and his own inability to meet any monetary demands in his present condition. To punish Bajirao for his treachery Sinda's ministers now proposed to set aside his claims in favour of his brother Chimnaji Appa. They won over Parasuram Bhau to their plan, imprisoned Bajirao and declared Chimnaji Appa *Pesva*, taking care to make his claims superior by having him adopted by the widow of Savai Madhav Rao.

#### **NANA RETURNS TO POWER.**

Chimnaji Appa's *Pesvaship* was not destined to last long. It was after all a compromise effected by secondaries in the contest for supremacy. Parasuram Bhau was unable to meet Sinda's demand for the large subsidy of a crore of rupees and the only person Sinda's *Divan* could think of squeezing for money was beyond his reach weaving deep-laid plots to effect a come back. The recent revolution at Poona brought the two aggrieved parties closer and soon a secret intercourse developed between Nana and Bajirao. The latter conveyed to the minister friendly assurances of his support in all his schemes to oust Baloba Tatya from government in his favour. Nana needed no further encouragement to exertions; he now set every engine at work. From his temporary abode at Mahad he sent emissaries to Tukoji Holkar, Raghuji Bhosle, Kolhapur Raja, the English at Bombay, the *Nizam* and even Tipu Sultan to assist him with troops for setting up Bajirao as *Pesva*. Baba Phadke and other partisans were asked to organize the *Mankaris* and foment trouble at the capital. Tukoji Holkar's power and influence were already at the minister's disposal. Nana's treasure began to flow freely and everybody that could be of use was promised whatever he demanded. Bhosle was to receive Rs. 15,00,000 in cash and the district of Gadga-Mandla; the Kolhapur Raja was given a subsidy of 2 lakhs and asked to seize Cikodi (Manoli district) and whatever other territory belonging to the Patvardhans and thus distract Parasuram Bhau. The *Nizam* whom Sinda was threatening with hostilities, readily listened to Nana's proposal. All the claims on the *Nizam* won at Khanda, were cancelled in return for his aid. The English were promised adequate remuneration in territory and specie for adopting Bajirao's cause and for assistance to be granted. Unfortunately for Nana, Sir John Shore, the non-interventionist Governor General was at the head of the Company's affairs and he warned his subordinates against engaging in the contest and Nana's agents had to content themselves with spreading rumours of the huge armaments that were preparing at Calcutta, Lucknow and Bombay in support of the minister.



Nana's chief triumph, however, lay in seducing Daulat Rav Sinde to his side in the contest. Through the Brahmin opponents of Baloba Pagnis, he led the young Sinde to believe that he was being financially ruined by the Senvi minister and that he was courting disaster in opposing Nana Phadnis whose cause had been espoused by powerful elements at home and abroad. Nana likewise conveyed to Sinde that he could accommodate him with a crore of rupees to meet his military needs, a *jagir* worth ten lakhs of rupees and the fort of Ahmadnagar on condition that he would 'place Baloba in confinement, declare for Baji Rav and return with his army to Hindustan.' Baloba little suspecting the fickleness and imbecility of his master remained ignorant of the plot in agitation. On the night of 26th October, he was seized with his colleagues and placed under guard. Nana Phadnis returned to Poona on 12th November and resumed his office a fortnight later. On 5th December Baji Rav, who had been released from Sinde's confinement, was duly invested with the *Pesvaship*. "The vigour of the minister's judgment, the fertility of his expedients, the extent of his influence and the combination of the instruments which he called into action surprised all India and from his European contemporaries procured him the name of 'the Maratha Machiavelli'".<sup>1</sup>

#### **NANA IMPRISONED.**

The master stroke of the minister, however, proved barren of results and all his accumulated treasure was expended in search of fancied security. Nana had worked miracles in 1774, but the generation of veteran patriots had now passed away giving place to selfish intriguers and their villainous underlings. The misfortunes which had united Nana Phadnis and Baji Rav had no sooner disappeared than their old hatred and jealousies revived. The demonstration of Nana's influence and the net work of his diplomacy frightened Baji Rav and before he would accept him as his minister he secured himself by a secret pact with Daulat Rav Sinde, never to abandon his cause, thus rendering ineffectual all the minister's attempts to persuade Sinde to withdraw to Hindustan. Nana's return to the ministry as later events were to prove, was no longer restoration to his old authority, but a ceaseless struggle of the old veteran against acts of wanton cruelty, extortion and moral degradation of the *Pesva* and his accomplice against himself, his partisans, and against all that was honourable and respectable in Maratha tradition.

Baji Rav from the beginning was determined to frustrate the minister's attempt to exercise his old authority. In preference to *Huzrat* troops that usually guarded the *Pesva's* palace he posted

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Mahrattas* by J. G. Grant Duff, vol. III, pp. 135-136. Duff was an employee of the British Residency and his later chapters are informative and reliable. He largely draws on the correspondence of Malet and Palmer and other Residencies for his narrative. This requires to be supplemented by material in Marathi.

round his palace Sinda's guards. Nana in self-defence engaged Arab soldiers. The *Pesva* refused to ratify the recent agreements concluded by the minister with the Bhosle and the *Nizam*, unless modified. He surrounded himself with the surviving members of his father's party, lavished gifts on low favourites and plunged in a life of sensuous gaiety. It did not matter if the treasury was empty; the *Pesva* fleeced the Patvardhans and their followers and levied all kinds of taxes on the populace of the capital, one of them being *Santos Patti* or contribution of congratulations on Baji Rav's accession<sup>1</sup>. It was impossible for the minister to conduct administration and master and servant distrusting each other refused to meet in open court and moved under heavy escort.

Men of sanity and goodwill detested the new *Pesva's* ways. Nana remonstrated with Amrt Rav on "the irregularity and levity of the conduct of Baji Rav who instead of attending to affairs of the State dissipated his time and property among dancers, singers and menial servants from which course he urged Amrt Rav to reclaim him."<sup>2</sup> Amrt Rav proposed to take a more active part in the administration which the suspicious *Pesva* looked on as another insidious attempt on the part of the minister to subvert his authority.

The dispute over Holkar's succession was another jarring note between the *Pesva* and the minister. Tukoji Holkar, Nana's staunch supporter died on 15th August, (1797), but a few months before his death he had obtained the assent of the *Pesva* and the minister to the succession of his eldest son, Kasi Rav. Kasi Rav was a half witted cripple and the other three sons of Tukoji refused to submit to the decision and started trouble in their *jagir* and were supposed to have obtained the support of Nana. Against his brothers Kasi Rav invited the aid of Daulat Rav Sinda. The Sinda's ministry welcomed the opportunity of subordinating the Holkar house and ending its rivalry in Hindustan. On 14th September a detachment of Sinda's corps attacked Malhar Rav Holkar's camp at Bhamburda dispersed his force and killed the chief. A great odium fell on Sinda and the *Pesva* for the death of the chief which added to their irritation against the minister.<sup>3</sup>

But the chief cause of friction was money. Daulat Rav Sinda had been promised huge subsidies both by the minister and the *Pesva* for promoting the latter's cause; he had received no small amounts (about fifty lakhs) from the minister from time to time.<sup>4</sup> But his household and huge military ate up all and he clamoured for more. Sinda now pressed the *Pesva* for two crores of ruppes that was to be the price of his aid. His demands on the *Pesva's* Government

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<sup>1</sup> *P. R. C.*, vol. VI, pp. 6-7, 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *P. R. C.*, vol. VI, pp. 44-48.

<sup>4</sup> *Aitihasik Lekha Sangraha*, vol X, pp. 4110, 4118, 4120.

went on increasing ; in addition to the payment of the balance due by the recent engagement he asked for cancellation of all the *Pesva*'s former claims on the *Sinde*'s chiefship and withdrawal of Ali Bahadur from Hindustan.<sup>1</sup> Baji Rav was without wealth or influence and suggested that only the old minister was obstructing the fulfilment of the engagements and standing between *Sinde* and his promised reward. The two now decided to apprehend Nana Phadnis and make him disgorge his riches. To lure him to a personal meeting one of *Sinde*'s European officers pledged his word ; on 31st December (1797). Nana Phadnis went to *Sinde*'s camp to return a formal visit of ceremony when he was seized with Aba Selukar, Bajaba Siolkar, Dada Gadre and several other persons of distinction who had accompanied him. Nana's guard of about a thousand that waited outside was attacked and dispersed. Sarje Rav Ghatge sent troops in the town to plunder the houses of Nana and his followers. Nana's Arab guards resisted and there was fighting. The city of Poona was like a town taken by storm ; all night and the ensuing day there was firing, uproar, plunder and bloodshed."<sup>2</sup>

The arrest of Nana Phadnis was the signal for the spoliation of his party. A few of his adherents had accompanied the minister to *Sinde*'s camp and were detained there. Baba Phadke, Naropant Cakradev, Trimbak Rav Paracure and the rest were invited by the *Pesva* to his palace on business and told that they' could gain liberty only by payment of huge fines. Several lakhs were collected in this way but *Sinde*'s hunger was insatiable. In February he married the beautiful daughter of Sarje Rav Ghatge with ostentatious display; the marriage expense and the clamours of his army for arrears could be satisfied only with money. He now pressed the *Pesva* for the promised subsidy of two crores. Nana Phadnis who was in *Sinde*'s custody refused to yield to threats and divulge his secret hoards. The *Pesva* had not the means of satisfying *Sinde*'s needs and he now suggested that it might be raised by contribution on the capital. *Sinde*'s father-in-law, Sarje Rav was put in charge of the nefarious business. A veritable reign of terror was let loose on the capital. Making Nana's residence his head-quarters, Ghatge seized merchants, bankers, money-lenders, in fact whomsoever he suspected of wealth, tortured them and made them disgorge their wealth; several died on the rack and several committed suicide.<sup>3</sup>

Sarje Rav was a ruffian and his insolence and cruelty made him insupportable and unpopular with the *Pesva* and his advisers. On the advice of his brother Amrt Rav, Baji Rav called Daulat Rav *Sinde* for a meeting, taxed him with encouraging the inhumanity and contumacy of his servant and asked him to retire to Hindustan. Having rid himself of the minister, Baji Rav was now equally

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<sup>1</sup> P. R. C., Vol. XI, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> P. B. C., Vol. VI, pp. 84-87, 91-95, 99-111.

<sup>3</sup> P. R. C., Vol VI, pp. 125-129. 136- 138, 153-158; Khare, Vol. X pp. 5374-5390.

anxious to liberate himself from the thralldom of Sinde. He entered into negotiations with the *Nizam* for obtaining his aid against Sinde. Sinde retaliated by sending his troops in the town to arrest the *Pesva* and his advisers. The attempt however failed and Sinde had fresh difficulties to face.<sup>1</sup>

#### **BAI'S WAR AND LIBERATION NANA PHADNIS.**

The widows of Mahadji Sinde had been promised ample provision by Daulat Rav on his succession, but had been neglected. In 1797 they came to Poona to seek redress but met with personal indignities at the hands of Sinde's new *Divan* Sarje Rav Ghaige. The cause of the ladies was popular with the Senvi chiefs of Sinde's army ; they had been disgusted at the elevation of Sarje Rav and now threw in their lot with the ladies. Sarje Rav made one or two unsuccessful attempts to disperse the insurgents, but they found shelter with the *Pesvas* brother, Amrt Rav and continued to gather strength. The spirit of dissatisfaction spread in Sinde's army. Lakhba Dada declared in favour of the ladies and set Sinde's authority to defiance. Daulat Rav had one resource left to intimidate Baji Rav and that was to release Nana Phadnis. Accordingly Nana was enlarged from Ahmadnagar fort on July 15th, and brought to Poona. The minister declared he had no inclination 'to return to the administration of government unless the contending views and interests by which the State was nearly ruined could be completely conciliated. The *Pesva* and *Sinde* had involved their affairs in much confusion and distress and his object was to reconcile them and rescue both from impending ruin'. In the distracted state of affairs the *Pesva* perceived that the experience and influence of Nana Phadnis was essential to the return of order and tranquillity in the state. He feigned sorrow at the late unhappy happenings, pleaded his innocence and asked the aged minister once more to accept office and save his government from ruin. Nana refused to be deceived by the duplicity of Baji Rav but at last consented to assume administration.

The great minister lived for a year and a half but had little control over either domestic or foreign affairs. The *Chatrapati* of Satara and his brother Catur Singh made a bid for their freedom and were fighting Raste's troops sent against them. The troops of Kolhapur Raja invaded the territory of the Patvardhans, plundered and razed Tasganv to ground and laid Karnatak under contribution. They defeated the Patvardhan troops at Pattankudi in September 1799 and killed Parasuram Bhau. The insurgents who had joined the Bais and Sinde troops ravaged the country from the Krsna to the Godavari. In Malva Yasvant Rav Holkar was laying the country waste and in the north the struggle between Lakhba Dada and Ambaji Ingle brought Maratha authority in contempt. A general atmosphere of anarchy and misrule prevailed in the Maratha country which now swarmed with horsemen and great devastations were committed. Life and property became insecure and it was obvious that things were heading towards a crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> Khare, Vol. X, 5391-5400.



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**DEATH OF NANA PHADNIS.**

Amidst these calamitous circumstances Nana Phadnis died on 13th March 1800 and “with him departed all wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government”. A great patriot and a diplomat he had succeeded in keeping the English at bay for over a quarter of a century. His last years were clouded by selfish intrigues and low cunning of his adversaries. “His power and influence were founded in his opposition to Raghoba. They were subsequently supported, consolidated and augmented by his having for a series of years the control of the State as Regent under a tractable minor *Pesva*. In the conduct of this important and arduous trust for a series of years Nana displayed considerable talents of a civil and financial nature, exerted with regularity, firmness and consistency, and qualified with great prudence and moderation. But Nana did not pretend to executive military talents and relied chiefly on his civil authority and address to control the army, which with his command of the treasures and resources of the state and the authority and influence of the *Pesvaship*, gave him till Savai Madhav Rava's death in October 1795, an effectual control not only over the military immediately dependent on the *Pesva* but also over the great members of the Empire.”<sup>1</sup> It is said that in subverting the right of Baji Rava to the *Pesvaship*, so as to keep power in his own hands he committed one blunder which had fatal consequences for himself and for the state. But it is difficult to understand how, circumscribed as he was, he could have avoided that. His statesmanship was of a limited type ; being too much steeped in conservatism and the old feudalistic order he refused to look at changes that were taking place round him and lacked the imagination to build a progressive state. With his death disappeared the last link connecting the Maratha Empire with its great warriors and statesmen. The field was left to two incompetent youths, Baji Rava and Daulat Rava who were no match for the British diplomats and soldiers.

**YASVANT RAVA HOLKAR CHALLENGES SHINDE.**

The death of Nana Phadnis released Baji Rava and Daulat Rava Shinde from all restraint. Within less than two months of that event Shinde had his *Senvi Karbhari*s imprisoned on the charge of being in league with the *Bais* and plotting against him. Sarje Rava Ghatge became Shinde's prime minister and on his advice Baloba Pagnis and his brother Dhondiba were sent into captivity at Ahmadnagar. Merciful death on 1 November 1800 saved the old minister from further indignities. His brother Dhondiba and some of his adherents, Tulaji Shinde, Manaji Vable, Yasvant Rava Vagle were blown off from a cannon, while Narayan Rava Baksi, son of the veteran Jivba Dada, was destroyed by rockets tied round his body. Baloba was suspected of intriguing with Nana's partisans for putting Amrt Rava in authority and reducing Baji Rava to a cipher and for Shinde's removal to Hindustan.<sup>2</sup> After the destruction of the *Senvi* ministers, Nana's remaining friends and adherents came in for a similar treatment. On the pretext of discussing with them

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<sup>1</sup> P.R.C., Vol. VI, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Aithihasik Lekha Sangraha*, Vol. XII, pp. 6462-6476, 6486.



the adoption of a son by Nana's widow, Naropant Cakradev, Bajaba Sirolkar, Raghopant Godbole and others were invited to the Pesva's palace, accused of treasonable practices, seized and sent to different forts. The Arab soldiery who were in the employ of these officers rose in revolt and fighting broke out in the heart of the capital. After considerable bloodshed the Arabs were pacified and agreed to retire on payment of the arrears. Amrt Rav in whose name the conspiracy was supposed to have been contrived was pensioned off and withdrew to Bassein. The extensive and fertile *jagir* of the Patvardhan was transferred to Sarje Rav Ghatge and Sinde's troops moved southward to take possession plundering and devastating the country from Miraj to Bijapur.<sup>1</sup>

Sinde's control over the *Pesva* was now complete and he demanded twenty-five lakhs of rupees in cash and new *jagir* being the price for the recent *coup*. Baji Rav was at his wits' end to satisfy Sinde's ever growing demands. He proposed an alliance with the British to free himself from the designs of Sarje Rav Ghatge. Sinde's affairs in Hindustan however soon reached a critical stage and Baji Rav called off the negotiations to the great disappointment of the Governor General.<sup>2</sup>

Yasvant Rav Holkar had fled to Nagpur after Sinde's attack on Malhar Rav's camp in September 1797. From Nagpur he escaped into Khandes and was joined by the old servants of the Holkar family. He seized the family treasure at Mahesvar, raised a considerable body of troops and devastated Sinde's territories in Malva. The Sinde's ladies and Lakhba Dada made common cause with Holkar who now threatened the total subjugation of Sinde's dominion in Hindustan. Matters having come to such a critical stage, Daulat Rav Sinde left Poona in November 1800 having extorted bills for forty-seven lakhs of rupees from the *Pesva*.<sup>3</sup>

In the summer of 1801 there was heavy fighting round the fords of the Narmada where Yasvant Rav Holkar won a number of brilliant victories and pillaged Sinde's capital Ujjain. By October Sinde's entire army had crossed over and inflicted a crushing defeat on Holkar at Indore. Sinde however instead of following the victory offered terms of peace which were rejected and Holkar resolved to carry the war into the Deccan. In this he was encouraged 'by the consideration that the power of the Poona Government had grown extremely weak and would fall an easy prey to his attack. If he could strike successfully at Poona and constitute himself the real custodian of the *Pesva*'s authority, he would give a rude

<sup>1</sup> *Poona Residency Correspondence Series*, Vol. VI, pp. 569, 579-581, 586; *Aitihāsik Lekha Sangraha* Vol. XII, pp. 6504, 6510-6515, 6521-6531, 6674, 6715-6718.

<sup>2</sup> *P.R.C.*, Vol VI, pp. 583-591.

<sup>3</sup> *Aitihāsik Lekha Sangraha*, Vol. XII, p. 6829, 6834, 6837-6838.

shock to Sinde's prestige and power in the south and correspondingly increase his own.<sup>1</sup> He appears also to have received secret incitement from the old *Mutsaddies* of Poona headed by Amrt Rav. To avenge the death of his brother Vithoji was the ostensible reason given out by him for coming southward.

After Sinde's departure Baji Rav instead of conciliating parties showed a spirit of revenge towards families suspected of disloyalty either towards his father or himself. 'To distress and pillage all such of them as fell into his hands was a favourite object of his policy.' The *Saranjams* of Phadke and Citnis were sequestered. Raste and his two sons, Hiroji Patankar, Dada Gadre, Nana's brother-in-law Vaisampayan, Bhikaji Pant Damle, More Athavale, to mention only a few names, were arrested on some pretext or other. The insecurity and oppression bred a general disaffection against the *Pesva's* rule and expressed itself in sporadic risings all over the country. Whoever could command a few horse took to pillage. More serious were the revolts of Jivaji Yasvant in Khandes and Vithoji Holkar in Solapur district. Vithoji after dispersal of Holkar's troops in 1797, fled in the direction of Pandharpur and took to a roving life. He soon gathered round himself a considerable following, was joined by Yasvant Rav Ramkrsna and Krsna Rav Modi two of Sinde's disaffected officers. Baji Rav sent against them Balkrsna Gangadhar Bavanpage but he too joined the rebels. They declared themselves servants of the *Pesva's* brother Amrt Rav, occupied posts and levied contributions in his name. This made them the particular objects of the *Pesva's* deep indignation. In March 1801 the rebels were defeated near the Man river. Vithoji Holkar was captured by Bapu Gokhale and sent to Poona. Baji Rav wished to make an example of him so as to deter the partisans of Amrt Rav from further attempts. Vithoji was given 200 strokes and then tied to the foot of an elephant and dragged round in the palace court yard.

Baji Rav by this barbarous execution sealed his own fate. Vithoji Holkar was no ordinary rebel. He belonged to one of the leading families in the Maratha state and the humiliation heaped on that family roused against the *Pesva*, general execration. Yasvant Rav Holkar 'vowed vengeance on those whom he considered his brother's murderers. He arrived in the Deccan in June, brushed aside a force sent against him at Dhond and arrived near Poona on 23rd October. He had been followed by a force despatched by Sinde under Sadasiv Bhau Bhaskar. Some feeble attempts at negotiations were made but could not succeed on account of Holkar's exorbitant demands and the mortal fear entertained of him by the *Pesva*. The issue was joined on 25th October. Holkar's bravery and dashing leadership carried the day. The joint army of Sinde and the *Pesva* was annihilated and the *Pesva* fled to the British for protection.

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<sup>1</sup> Baji Rav and East India Company by P, C. Gupta.

**THE GREAT BETRAYAL. Treaty of Bassein.**

Baji Rav's authority as *Pesva* was rooted in Sinde's military power and when that was temporarily annihilated the *Pesva* was in a panic. His own military strength was contemptible; his perfidious conduct and treachery towards most of his military chieftains had alienated them from him, excited a general feeling of discontent and dis-satisfaction towards his government and left the *Pesva* friendless. Holkar's troops and *Pendharis* barred his escape route to the north to join Sinde. In sudden fright, Baji Rav fled to Mahad in konkan and from thence sailed to Bassein in a ship provided by the British Resident at Bankot. At Bassein on 31st December 1802, he concluded an engagement with the Company's Government accepting British aid for his restoration. The Company agreed to furnish the *Pesva*, a subsidiary force of not less than six thousand regular Native Infantry with the usual proportion of field pieces and European artillerymen attached and with the proper equipment of warlike stores and ammunition, to be stationed permanently within the *Pesvas* territory. For its support the *Pesva* surrendered to the Company, territory yielding an annual revenue of 26 lakhs of rupees. The Company obtained control over the *Pesvas* foreign relations and was to act as arbitrator in his disputes with the *Nizam* and Gaikvad. The *Pesva* agreed to take no Europeans into his service without the leave of the British Government. It was obvious that henceforward British bayonets were to maintain the *Pesva* in his power, secure him against domestic as well as foreign rivals and exercise a strict control over his affairs. His independence was a matter of the past. In search of fancied security and in the hope of clinging to his authority, Baji Rav had betrayed his trust and sold himself and his people into subjugation.

For the Company's Government the treaty of Bassein was not a pact hastily concluded to aid the *Pesva* in his distress; it was a culmination of a policy steadily pursued over more than quarter of a century of bringing native rulers under British sovereignty. The policy of non-interference in the affairs of Indian powers had served its day and had been swept aside by Lord Wellesley who came to India as Governor General in 1798. He was out and out an imperialist and had made up his mind to bring the entire continent under British domination. He saw that Great Britain could no longer play any but the dominant part in India. Within a year of his arrival he crushed Tipu's power, persuaded the effete *Nizam* to accept British suzerainty and then turned to the Marathas in the name of the security and tranquillity of British dominion in India. He offered defensive alliance to all the Maratha chiefs. Suspicious of British advances they had refused to consider them. "But the present crisis of affairs in the Maratha State afforded the Governor General the most favourable opportunity for the complete establishment of the interests of the British power in the Maratha empire."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Martin, *Wellesley's Despatches*, vol. III, p. 6

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The war that followed arose out of the unwillingness of the Maratha chiefs to recognize the treaty which dissolved their union. They felt they had been outwitted by the English and brought to the verge of ruin by the *Pesva's* folly. Holkar, after Baji Rav's departure from Poona attempted to set up a new regime with the help of Amrt Rav and his partisans, but in view of the impending march of British troops his cause could get few adherents and he retired to Khandes, in March 1803. Daulat Rav Sinde who had in the beginning welcomed British intervention soon became disillusioned when he discovered that "the re-establishment of the *Pesva* in the Government of Poona under the exclusive protection of the British power deprived him of every hope of ever regaining the control that he exercised before. Sinde and Bhosle opened frantic negotiations with Holkar to sink their differences and offer a united front to the English to rescue the *Pesva* from his British friends. But even in the hour of danger the Maratha chiefs could not forget their mutual animosities. The war that was forced on the chiefs found them unprepared and disunited. In a swift campaign that lasted less than four months, the armies of Sinde and Bhosle were defeated at Assaye, Adganv and Gavilgad ; at the same time Sinde's northern command was shattered at Agra and Lasvari. By the treaties concluded in December 1803, at Devganv and Surji Anjan-ganv, Bhosle and Sinde concluded peace, abandoning large parts of their conquests in Hindustan and the Deccan and accepting the dissolution of the confederacy.

### **BAJI RAV AND EAST INDIA COMPANY.**

The first few years of post-war *Pesvaship* were marked by the greatest cordiality between the *Pesva* and the English. Released from the irksome tutelage of Nana Phadnis as well as the dreaded rivalry of his powerful feudatories the *Pesva* was free to follow his inclination in the arrangement of his affairs. He selected men after his own heart for office in government and gave himself up entirely to a life of vicious pleasure alternated by religious observances. The British Resident at Poona took care to see that he did not involve himself in foreign intrigues and was kept in good humour and the presence of the Subsidiary force hastened the restoration of tranquillity in the *Pesva's* dominion. The *Pesva* expressed his gratitude to the English declaring, "I know you both (the Marathas and the English), I have tried you both and I speak from what I feel. Those men with *turbans* who were my servants sought my ruin. You who wear hats and are foreigners, saved me from destruction and gave me back my throne. While they were here I was insulted and oppressed. Now that you are here, I am in repose and I do as I please. They took from their master crores of rupees and still asked for more. You have spent crores of rupees for a friend and demand nothing in return"<sup>1</sup> Col. Close who continued at the Residency till 1809, very tactfully avoided unpleasant discussions and was

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<sup>1</sup> P. R. C. vol. VII, p, 233.

helped in this by the non-interference policy of Marlow and Minto which desired no further entanglements with Native Courts.

### **Settlement with Southern Jagirdars (1812).**

But decisions on unpleasant topics could not be postponed indefinitely. When the *Pesva* signed the treaty of Bassein in 1802 he little understood its real significance : he did not know that his restoration to the *Pesvaship* did not bring him back his old authority over his feudatories. He fondly imagined that the English force subsidised by him would help him crush his refractory subjects and give him complete sovereignty over them. From the signing of that treaty the *Pesva* had urged the use of the Subsidiary force to put an end to the troubles created by the Southern *Jagirdars*, by destroying their levies and confiscating their *saranjams*. The Southern *Jagirdars*, the Patvardhans, the Rastes, the *Pratinidhi*, the Desais of Kittur, were all Nana's partisans and were the special objects of the *Pesva's* hatred. For years they carried on chronic warfare among themselves, seized Government lands and defied the *Pesva's* officers in Karnatak. The *Pesva* looked to his British allies for help to break the power of these *Jagirdars* and resume their grants.

An attempt to bring about a settlement with *Jagirdars* was made by Arthur Wellesley in 1803, but was not pursued during, the pendency of war with Holkar and the subsequent inroads of the *Pendharis* in the Deccan. In 1811, Elphinstone came to the Poona embassy and felt that these Chiefs should be brought under control because in their unsettled state they were always a thorn in the side in time of war. But he refused to fall in with the *Pesvas* plan. He would not countenance the aggression of the *Pesva* over the *Jagirdars*; while bringing the feudatories to obedience by the treaty of Pandharpur, concluded in 1812, he extended to them British guarantee of protection.<sup>1</sup> This pledge of security by the Resident to the *Jagirdars* came as a painful surprise to the *Pesva*. It made a mockery of his authority over his subjects. It was not so much their allegiance that he desired as their destruction. The arbitration effected by the Resident was altogether distasteful to the *Pesva* and embittered his mind. He took a strong dislike to his erstwhile friends. This was the first serious rift between the *Pesva* and the English.

### **Mission of Gangadhar Sastri (1814).**

The settlement with the Southern *Jagirdars* was followed by the another episode which again emphasised the serious differences between the *Pesva* and English. This was the mission of Gangadhar, Sastri to Poona. The *Pesva* had long standing claims on the, Gaikvad and had repeatedly asked the British Governmet for a settlement.<sup>2</sup> The Gaikvad's Government was in utmost confusion

<sup>1</sup> Poona Residency Correspondence Scies, vol. XII, pp. 80-110, 150-156 163-169.

<sup>2</sup> *P. R. C.*, vol. XI, pp. 275-293.



and it was not until 1814 that an envoy could be deputed to discuss the claims. Gangadhar Sastri arrived in Poona in the beginning of 1814. It was soon discovered that the Sastri had authority to discuss only the financial aspect of the dispute with the *Pesva* which the Poona Court professed to treat as a subordinate issue.<sup>1</sup> The *Pesva* wanted to utilise the opportunity offered by the Sastri's mission for asserting his paramount authority over the Gaikvad. This the British would not accept. Negotiations dragged on fruitlessly for months in the absence of common ground. The *Pesva* was encouraged in his recalcitrant attitude by his low associates, chief among whom was Trimbakji Derigle. The Sastri's refusal to agree with the *Pesva*'s view cost him his life. He was foully murdered in the Vitthal temple at Pandharpur on 20th July 1815<sup>2</sup>.

### **Arrest of Trimbakji Dengle.**

The news of the murder of the Sastri, a Brahmin and a foreign envoy, caused great consternation. Elphinstone immediately demanded punishment of the authors and instigators of the crime. He asked the *Pesva* to confine Trimbakji, who, he declared, was condemned by the universal voice of his subjects. After much protracted negotiations the *Pesva* yielded. But the arrest of Trimbakji and his imprisonment in the Thana fort in no way settled affairs. The seizure of his favourite minister was looked on by the *Pesva* as his own disgrace. At the same time the Governor General conveyed to the *Pesva* a message telling him that his authority was restricted to his independent possessions and no longer extended over the former feudatory Maratha States and his British allies did not propose to restore the old order of things.<sup>3</sup> This the *Pesva* felt as a deliberate insult added to grievous injury and his thoughts turned to revenge and retaliation which he now pursued with secrecy and duplicity peculiar to his nature.

### **Pesva prepares for war.**

The first stage in the act was the release of Trimbakji Dengle. Baji Rav entreated the Resident to set free his minister and spoke of sending a *vakil* to the Governor General to effect his release. The Nepal War was not progressing according to plan; and the temporary reverses of English troops were much exaggerated in Native Courts and were received with great jubilation. Secret plans and schemes for throwing off the English yoke began to be discussed. The Resident unaware of these rumblings, was reporting to Calcutta that all was quiet at Poona and that the *Pesva* was in a chastened mood and had changed his ways. His complacency was soon to be rudely shaken.

Trimbakji Derigle managed to effect his escape from Thana Fort on 12th September 1816. Money for the purpose appears to have

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<sup>1</sup> *P. R. C.*, Vol. XI, pp. 343-348, 369-372.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 375-77.

<sup>3</sup> *P. R. C.*, vol. XIII, pp. 16-17.

been supplied by the *Pesva* through a relative of the Denge. The story of the escape is too well-known to detain us here. The song recorded by Bishop Habar aptly represents popular sentiment :—

“There are five and fifty coursers there, And four and fifty men; When the fifty-fifth shall mount his steed, the Deccan thrives again.”

### **Peshva prepares for war.**

Trimbakji fled to his native place Nimbganv in Nasik district and when pursued, disappeared into the Mahadev hills, south-east of Poona. By the end of February 1817, the British Resident had definite information that Trimbakji had collected 3000 horse and 3000 infantry including the Ramosis of the region in the neighbourhood of Phaltan and that he was in communication with the *Pesva*. A week later he was informed of money being sent to Trimbakji from Pandharpur and of men enlisting under his colours. All the accounts brought in by the Brahmin spies and Harkaras to the Residency tended to prove Trimbakji's preparations for insurrection. And yet the *Pesva* when asked to explain, denied the existence of the insurrection and the *Pesvas* detachment sent against the insurgents quietly sat down in the midst of the insurgent's tract and reported that there were no rebels.<sup>1</sup>

Elphinstone was convinced that the *Pesva* was privy to the conspiracy and favoured its progress. He also received reports from Berar and Khandes, of troops assembling for Trimbakji under the immediate directions of the *Pesva's* officers, of forts being repaired, of the *Pesva* having started intrigues at the Courts of Sinde and Holkar and of his remitting money to Hindustan. The Resident sent repeated messages of remonstrance to the *Pesva* only to be met with a total denial of facts. On 7th March (1817), a final warning; was delivered that unless the *Pesva* took measures to seize Timbakji's family' and adherents and disperse the insurgents he would be involved in a dispute with the British Government, the fatal consequences of which could not be foreseen.<sup>2</sup>

The *Pesva* was however not to be deterred from the course he was determined to follow. Throughout the month of March his hostile preparations continued. His principal chiefs were directed to levy troops, the hill forts were provisioned, treasure and jewels were sent out of Poona and the *Pesva* was reported to be intriguing with other Native Courts. The Resident had no doubt now that the *Pesva* was engaged in a deliberate conspiracy to stir up a war against the British Government. He informed the Governor General, that the *Pesva* was never to be trusted again and that stern measures should be taken without loss of time to crush his power and deprive him

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<sup>1</sup> *P. R. C.*, vol. XIII, pp. 81-126.

<sup>2</sup> Forest, Official Writings, p. 168.

of the means of harming the Company, should if at any time be engaged in hostilities elsewhere in India. Elphinstone made the necessary military dispositions and waited for orders from Calcutta.

The Subsidiary force under the Commanding Officer, General Smith, arrived at Poona on the 6th of May: about the same time Elphinstone learnt from a private source that the Governor General had approved of his suggestion of dealing sternly with the *Pesva*, but that owing to disturbances in Orissa, his *dak* had been delayed on the way. On the next day an ultimatum was delivered to the *Pesva*, insisting on the immediate surrender of Trimbakji Dehgle within the period of one month. For obtaining solid proof of the *Pesva's* sincerity, Elphinstone demanded to be put in immediate possession of three hill-forts, Sinhgad, Purandar and Rayagad. On the 8th morning the city was surrounded and the *Pesva* then submitted and delivered the forts to the Resident. A proclamation offering reward for the seizure of Trimbakji or for giving information leading to his seizure, was issued under the *Pesva's* signature. His adherents were named in the proclamation and their possessions were confiscated.<sup>1</sup> The Governor General's orders were received on 10th May and in conformity with them a new treaty was concluded on 13th June. It declared Trimbakji as the murderer of Gangadhar Sastri and the *Pesva* promised to arrest him and deliver him to the English. The dissolution in form and substance of the Maratha confederacy was recognised by the *Pesva* and he agreed to recall his agents from foreign Courts including those of the former Maratha feudatories. He made fresh cessions worth thirty-four lakhs of rupees to the British Government for maintaining additional troops at his cost and abandoned all claims over territories beyond the Narmada.<sup>2</sup>

### Third Maratha War.

The treaty of Poona was a heavy blow to the *Pesva*. He had been forced to pay an enormous price for the Company's alliance which had humiliated him and made a mockery of his *Pesvaship*. When he met Malcolm at Mahuli in August next he talked to him with an air of injured innocence, but at the same time pursuing his preparations against the English. The native powers had become restive at the rapidly increasing aggressions of the British and they now looked to the *Pesva* to head the war against them. The *Pesva's* military advisers, among whom Bapu Gokhale now occupied the chief post, counselled him to lie low and wait till the break-up of the monsoon, use the interval for perfecting negotiations with Sinde, Holkar and Bhosle, and the *Pendhari* chieftains and then rise simultaneously against the British. They pinned their hope to the traditional Maratha warfare, of the Maratha horse ravaging the country all round and making it impossible for the enemy to obtain provisions. These preparations could not be concealed from the Resident and

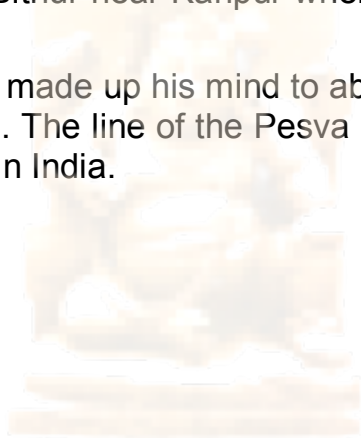
<sup>1</sup> P. R. C, vol. XIII, pp. 159.166.

<sup>2</sup> G. G.'s Instructions, 7th April and 17th May 1817.

he called back the Subsidiary force that had been sent northward to co-operate with Hislop in his operations against the *Pendharies*. The *Pesva* could no longer delay the attack. His army under Bapu Gokhale burnt the Residency and attacked the small force under Col. Burr on November, 5th, 1817, on the plains extending from the Catursringi hill but was repulsed. The Third Maratha War had begun.

The issue of the war was never in doubt. The Governor General had prepared a vast army to put an end to the *Pendhari* menace and this army took the field immediately after the end of the rainy season. The principal *Pendhari* leader, Amir Khan, came to an understanding with the English and Daulat Rav Sinde, cowering before English bayonets, entered into fresh treaty relations with Company on the same day that the battle of Kirkee was fought in the Deccan. Holkar State was in utmost confusion and his army was destroyed in the battle of Mahidpur. Appa Saheb Bhosle was defeated in the battle of Sitabuldi. Thus the friends to whom the *Pesva* looked for support proved broken reeds. His own army consisting of raw levies of Maratha horse and mercenary Arab soldiers was no match for the disciplined and well-equipped English force under Smith. At the battle of Asti (February, 1818), Bapu Gokhale was killed and the English captured the *Raja* of Satara and his family ; from now on they posed as fighting on behalf of the successor of the Great Sivaji and a number of *Jagirdars* left the *Pesvas* standard. Baji Rav became a fugitive and nobody seemed willing to offer him shelter. At last he surrendered to Malcolm on 3rd June 1818, at Mhow near Indore and set on his journey to Bithur near Kanpur where he lived as a pensioner of the Company for thirty years and died in 1851.

The Governor-General had made up his mind to abolish the *Pesva-ship* and place his territory under direct British administration. The line of the *Pesva* became extinct and Maratha country came to form a part of British dominion in India.



## CHAPTER 6\*

### THE MARATHAS AND THE ENGLISH

#### EARLY RELATIONS.

THE ENGLISH CAME TO INDIA AS TRADERS. The profits of the eastern trade were enormous and had always attracted the more adventurous people of Europe. For about a hundred years after the opening of the sea-route to India, Portugal enjoyed absolute monopoly of this trade, but since the beginning of the 17th century their prosperity was on the decline. The rising maritime powers of Holland and Great Britain dealt severe blows to the naval supremacy of Portugal and challenged its monopoly of Asiatic commerce. The Dutch concentrated on the spice islands and the seizure of Malacca in 1641, signalled their triumph over the Portuguese in that region. They also squeezed the English out of the Malay Archipelago and in a way were responsible for turning the attention of the English to the mainland of India.

The victories of Capt. Best (1612) and Capt. Downton (1614) over Portuguese fleets off the mouth of Tapi river cleared the way for the English for opening of trade with India. A *farman* obtained from Emperor Jehangir in 1613, gave them permission to establish a factory at Surat and with it secured them the only key to open all the rich and best trade of the Indies'. The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe (1615-1618), made excellent impression at the Moghal court and soon subordinate agencies sprang up at Ahmadabad, Burhanpur, Ajmer and Agra. The story of the progress of the East India Company in the 17th century and the establishment of factories clustering round Bombay, Madras and Calcutta has been told earlier. The rivalry of the East India Company with the Marathas in the 18th century for supremacy in India forms the theme of this chapter.

The Marathas and the English were not strangers when they met in the political arena at the opening of the century. The English were essentially traders seeking concessions from native rulers for

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\* This Chapter is contributed by Dr. V. G. Dighe.



exchanging their merchandise. They had faithfully followed the advice of their first ambassador in India. "Let this be received as a rule that if you will profit, seek it at sea, and in quiet trade ; for without controversy it is an error to affect garrisons and land wars in India".<sup>1</sup> In pursuance of this advice the English had confined themselves to trade and had set up a number of factories along the West Coast and in the interior. If they watched political events in the country they watched them for the safety and security of their business.

From 1650, the English factors witnessed the rise of the Marathas under the leadership of Sivaji. The hardy mountaineers and peasants dwelling in the Western corner of India defied the power first of the Adilsahi Sultanate and later of the Moghal empire and the English followed their progress with considerable interest. What the Marathas thought of these foreign traders it is difficult to surmise. They treated them with suspicion, but showed little curiosity to know about their country, their way of life or their form of Government. For their navies, they had respect, but on land held them as altogether despicable.

#### **SHIVAJI AND THE ENGLISH.**

The earliest political contact between the Marathas and the English occurred in January 1660, when Sivaji's troops came upto Rajapur in pursuit of three junks of Afzal Khan in which Afzal's agent had fled there with his master's property, on the capture of Dabhol by the enemy. The English prevented the seizure of these boats and the goods contained in them. A year later in retaliation for the aid given by the English to Siddi Johar at the siege of fort Panhala, Sivaji surprised Rajapur and plundered the English factory carrying away with him as prisoners the four factors, Henry Revington, Richard Taylor, Randolph Taylor and Philip Gyffard. The factors were released in March 1663, but apparently no compensation was paid to the English in spite of protracted negotiations. In 1664 and 1670 Sivaji marched on Surat and stripped the city of its fabulous wealth. Though the entire populace suffered at the hands of the invaders, the English defended their factory and warehouse, and were left unmolested. In the years following when Sivaji attacked Karvar and Hubli, the English factors had to contribute their share of the fine levied on the towns.

Sivaji's revolt in the Deccan and the disturbance caused by it hampered trade and were therefore distasteful to the English merchants. But their trading interests on the mainland, the vicinity of the island of Bombay—their chief seat of authority on the west coast—to the Maratha country and its dependence on it for food and fuel, slowly but inevitably drew the English in the vortex of Maratha politics.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*, ed. by W. Foster (Hakluyat Society), vol. II, 344.

The rise of the Maratha State claiming to unite the country of Maharashtra under its rule was a threat to the security of foreign settlements on the west coast. The Siddi and the Portuguese who held between them most of the Konkan littoral were naturally hostile to the new power. The English though they yet avowed no territorial ambitions, looked askance at the irruption of this novel element. They always made a merit of their being traders with no inclination to take part in the struggle that waged round them.

The Siddi's stronghold of Janjira lay only 45 miles from Bombay, the seat of the English settlement on the west coast. He found Bombay a convenient point from which to descend on the mainland, sack and burn villages, seize Sivaji's subjects and capture his shipping in the Pen river. The geographical position of the Siddi State marked its ruler as the natural enemy of the Marathas and his atrocities and barbarous treatment of Maratha prisoners inflamed Maratha temper. The Siddi however was a tough fighter; his long experience of sea-faring, his powerful navy, his possession of the island castle of Janjira and his connection with the Moghal Court, balked Sivaji of his prey. The Maratha ruler and his successors greatly desired English aid to bring the Siddi to his knees, which the English with large stakes in the Moghal country could ill afford to grant; at the same time they were anxious to appease and keep fair with the Maratha ruler. In 1674, at the time of Raja's coronation they sent an embassy under Henry Oxenden to congratulate him and conclude a treaty to trade in his country. After a fruitless attempt on the part of Sivaji's ministers to engage the English in a treaty of alliance against the Siddi, a commercial treaty granting them facilities to trade in the Raja's dominions was signed. This treaty governed the relations between the Marathas and the English for over half a century.

The treaty of Rayagad though hailed as very advantageous to both parties, did not lull mutual suspicions. Within two years of its ratification the Bombay Council was complaining that "so long as that pirate and universal robber lives, that hath no regard to friend nor foe, God nor man, there can be no security in any trade in his country."<sup>1</sup> The occupation of the island of Khanderi, lying at the mouth of Bombay harbour, by Sivaji in 1679, brought about a collision. When Sivaji found that the English would not or could not restrain the Siddi from entering the Panvel creek and molesting his territory, he sent his marines to occupy the island of Khanderi (Kenry) which commands the entry into the harbour of Bombay.

The English became apprehensive that 'Sivaji's designs could not be otherwise than to have check on the whole trade of Bombay and adjacent parts keeping there always a fleet of small brigantines to cruise up and down'<sup>2</sup> The Deputy Governor of Bombay

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<sup>1</sup> F. R., Surat, vol. 89, pp. 69-70.

<sup>2</sup> F. R., Bombay, vol. 8, p. 28.

requested the Maratha Commander to quit the place as it belonged to the island of Bombay. The request was declined and the work on fortifications went ahead. The expedition sent to dislodge the inmates (September 1679) failed miserably. At the end of November, the Siddi joined the English in blockading the island of Khan-deri. Sivaji in retaliation threatened to invade Bombay and collected a large army at Kalyan at which the inhabitants of Bombay became greatly alarmed. The Surat Council dreading a protracted struggle climbed down, withdrew its ships and made peace (January 1680). Khanderi remained in the hands of the Marathas.

Dr. Fryer who then passed through Bombay has left in his journal the popular impression of the episode. He observes, “ amongst these wars, and rumours of wars, we quietly lay down our Arms and leave Seva Gi and Syddy alone to contend for our stony piece of ground on Henry Kenry; how much to our Honour or Reproach ‘Why be gathered from the language daily cast in our Teeth. ‘ Why vaunt your Nation ? What Victories have you achieved ? What has your sword done ? Who ever felt your power ? What do you possess ?.....everyone runs you down; you can scarce keep Bombain, winch you got not by your Valour, but compact; And will you pretend to be Men of War or cope with our Princes ? It’s fitter for you to live on Merchandise and submit to us.”<sup>1</sup>

The period following Sivaji’s demise, till the end of the century was one of peace between the Marathas and the English. The war-fare between the Moghal and the Marathas was quickened in 1681 by the arrival in the Deccan of Aurangzeb himself and engrossed the entire energies of the Maratha nation. The coastal districts were overrun by Moghal armies and the Siddi was once more put in charge of places he had lost to Sivaji before. He now became very active and attacked Maratha shipping in Bombay waters. Sambhaji’s protest against his sheltering in the harbour went unheeded. The nascent Maratha navy was swept off the sea.

#### **RISE OF KANHOJI ANGRE.**

At the end of the century however there was a turn of fortune. Kanhoji Angre by his daring and enterprise raised himself to the position of Admiral of the Maratha fleet (1698) and claimed tribute from all vessels sailing along the west coast. Angre’s activities formed a part of the general struggle of the Maratha people against Moghal conquest of their homeland. The chief objective to which his policy was directed was to recover Maratha territory occupied by the Siddi and other foreign powers. The Western seas were to be Maratha waters and all who visited ports established in them, were to be taught to respect Maratha sovereignty and secure his permission for trading in those waters by buying his passes. Whatever power refused to conform to his orders would do it at the peril of bringing on its merchantmen his strong hand. His claim was challenged by the Siddi as well as the European powers, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English, who on account of important

<sup>1</sup> John Fryer, *A new account of the East Indies and Persia*, vol. 3, pp. 163-165.

trading interests on the Malbar coast, found such a demand most galling and injurious to their commerce. They preferred to look on Angre as a pirate, as an enemy of peaceful commerce and made light of his high-sounding demands. Confident of their superiority at sea with their large ocean-sailing vessels and with their greater fire-power the Europeans refused to submit to Angre's claims and preferred to fight out the issue. Angre's fleet though inferior in weight and number, could always seek the shelter of forts which lined the coast. So long as his rear remained secure, Angre could laugh at the efforts of his enemies to destroy his naval power. A state of perpetual warfare, punctuated by short periods of peace, therefore, existed on the coast between the Maratha Admiral and his neighbours.

The English at Bombay watched Angre's activities with great anxiety. Small ships belonging to the country merchants plying between Bombay and Cochin were seized by him and hardly any shipping could pass or repass Bombay. In 1699 they expressed their fears "of Sevajeos and Sanganiens grown strong and impudent so that scare any boats can pass to and from the island without convoys."<sup>1</sup> The Bombay Consultation, dated 6 February 1699 reports "the *Subhedar* of Kanhoji Angre having agreed to the release of two Bombay merchants and requesting salt boats to visit his country."<sup>2</sup> In the fighting that broke out between the Siddi and Angre at the end of 1700 the Siddi accused the English with supplying the Sevajeos with ammunition.<sup>3</sup> In 1702 a small trading vessel from Calicut with six Englishmen on board fell in Kanhoji's hands. A year later his galivats were worrying the fishermen of Worlee.<sup>4</sup> In September of that year the English seized a *grab* sailing under Angre's colour as "Conajee Angre and his people were at sundry times committing many injurious and piratical actions on the inhabitants of this island". In 1704 November Kanhoji Angre boldly rode into the bay of Bombay and anchoring his vessels at the mouth of the Pen river threatened to starve the island. Mr. Reynolds was deputed to find him and tell him that "he could not be permitted searching, molesting or seizing vessels without breach of the existing friendship."<sup>5</sup> Angre returned a defiant answer saying that "The Sevajeos had done many services for the English that never kept their word with him; .....that they lived now by their sword and would seize what boats or other vessels belonging either to the Mogulls vessels from any of his ports or Mallabarr, excepting such as had Conajee Angre's passports ; the English being at liberty acting as they please."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O. C. vol. 55, No. 6642

<sup>2</sup> F. R., Bombay, vol. 5, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> O. C, vol. 56, No. 7506.

<sup>4</sup> F. R., Bombay, vol. 5, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> *Bombay Public Proceedings*, vol. 2, pp. 15, 17, 21.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Surat letters to the Directors, of the period, are full of lament for losses suffered by them at hands of Angre. In February 1707 Kanhoji captured the Company's *Machva* cruising off the Mahim river. In the same year the *Bombay* frigate was blown up in an encounter with his ships. In 1710, a Dutch sloop of war was captured and the *Godolphin* narrowly escaped the same fate. In 1711 the Directors were told that Angre could take any ship except the largest ones : " along the coast from Surat to Dabul he takes all private merchant vessels he meets". The next year he captured the Governor of Bombay's armed Yacht and the *Anne* Karvar and attacked the *Somers* and the *Grantham* East Indiamen.<sup>1</sup>

While thus at war with his maritime neighbours Kanhoji Angre as a partisan of Tara Bai, found himself involved in civil war. On the advice of Balaji Visvanath he soon came to an understanding with Sahu and was confirmed in the command of the fleet, was put in charge of several forts in Konkan and promised support in the contest with the Siddi.<sup>2</sup>

Kanhoji about this time also made up his differences with the English. In February 1713 he agreed that "in future English ships should be free from molestation, that no ships of any nation coming into Bombay harbour should be interfered with between Mahim and Kennery (Khanderi), that English merchants should have liberty of trade in Angre's ports on payment of the usual dues and that Angre should be responsible for any damages done in future by the ships belonging to his Maratha superiors. In return the Governor engaged to give passes only to ships belonging to the subjects of the English nation and to allow Angre's people full facilities in Bombay."<sup>3</sup>

The treaty concluded with the English proved but a temporary truce. The town of Bombay was then unwallled and the factory had no marine to protect its interests. The island was in a declining posture when Charles Boone arrived as Governor at the end of 1713. With his arrival the settlement began to show great activity in equipping its fighting marine. Within two years it had built and equipped a fleet—consisting of " nineteen frigates, grabs, ketches, gallivats and rowing galleys, carrying two hundred and twenty guns besides a bomb-vessel and a fireship". This naturally alarmed Kanhoji and when he found the English engaged in war with the Sounda Raja he recommenced attacks on Bombay shipping.

The immediate cause of hostilities was the capture of their merchantmen, *The Success*, the *Robert* and the *Otter* by Angre. Angre contended that these vessels belonged to foreign merchants

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<sup>1</sup> *Malbar Pirates*, by Biddulph, pp. 77, 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Treaties, Agreements and Sanads*, edited by Mawjee and Parasnis, p 197.

<sup>3</sup> *Bombay Public Consultations Range*, ecc XLI, No. 4, (Consultation, 12th February 1713).



and though laden with the goods of the Company could claim no exemption from his passes. The English retaliated by the seizure of one of Angre's Sibar that visited Mahim and attack on his coastal towns. War was formally declared on 17 June 1718.

On the close of the monsoon on 2nd November a formidable expedition consisting of two East Indiamen, the *Victoria* frigate, the *Revenge* and *Defiance* grabs, the *Fame* galley, the *Hunter Ketch* and fifty gallivats sailed against the island of Khanderi. Boone led the expedition in person in the *Addison*. Two more ships the *Morrice* and *Stanhope* joined the expedition a week later. A distant cannonade having produced little effect it was decided to take the fort by assault. Two attempts at landing were made on 6th and 7th November but both failed, the landing party was driven to the water and many were drowned. The fleet then proceeded to Kolaba, threw in a few shots and then sailed southward to do what damage it could to Angre's forts and ships. They found a grab at Vijaydurg but the fire vessel of the fleet was blown up by a shot from the enemy before she could board the grab. Going to Karvar they came across Angre's fleet and took four of their prizes but the grabs got away. On the return voyage the fleet once more looked into Vijaydurg creek, found none of Angre's fighting vessels, cast in a few cowhorns setting fire to some houses and then resumed its voyage to Bombay (December 1718).<sup>1</sup>

Attempts were made about this time by Sahu *Raja* to intervene and stop the fighting. The terms proposed by the English were not acceptable and the treaty was not ratified. In consequence another expedition consisting of nine vessels and several fishing boats for landing troops and a strong detachment of troops was sent against Vijaydurg (Gheria) in September of 1720 under Walter Brown. Angre's fleet retired up the river and the cannonading had little effect on the fort. After burning a few boats the English commander retired.<sup>2</sup> The Government of Bombay celebrated this as a victory and fired salutes, but Angre affirmed it was an inglorious defeat and demonstrated the little regard in which he held the enemy's threats he attacked the English ship *Charlotte* (April 1720) and carried her into Gheria.<sup>3</sup>

Angre's career was unchecked. He continued to defy the efforts of the Portuguese and the English to bring him to book. However common danger made the two European rivals forget their old animosities and join hands in an alliance to destroy their enemy. A treaty providing for a joint attack on Kolaba was concluded on 20th August 1721.

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<sup>1</sup> The failure of the expedition against Khanderi is attributed to the treachery of Rama Kamat, a Hindu inhabitant of Bombay. More correctly, it should be attributed to a Portuguese renegade Manuel de Castro : see Downing's History of the Indian Wars, Introduction, p. xvi and pp. 33-39.

<sup>2</sup> *Bombay Abstracts*, vol. J, p. 376 and the Bombay Gazetteer, vol. xxvi, Part I, p. 152 ; History of the Indian Navy by Low, vol. I, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

The arrival of a royal squadron in Bombay in September (1721) under Commodore Mathews further added to the strength of the allies. On 29th November the expedition sailed from Bombay and joined the Portuguese force at Caul. Alibag was bombarded on the 12th December and two days later an assault was made on the fort. No breach had been made and the walls were twenty feet high. The attack was repulsed with heavy losses, the Portuguese showing little spirit. The Viceroy of Goa being taken ill retired to his ship and the Portuguese contingent broke as soon as they saw the enemy advancing. Commodore Mathews watching the rout flew into a rage and roughly handled the Portuguese Captain. *Pesva* Biji Rav and Pilaji Jadhav on behalf of Sahu *Raja* arrived at the head of six thousand cavalry, seized the field guns and ammunition of the enemy and threatened to wipe out his entire force.

The entry of Sahu in the war immediately turned the scales against the allies. The Portuguese were not prepared to antagonise the entire Maratha nation and as soon as the *Pesva* offered to mediate in the dispute, they accepted his mediation. The insolent behaviour of the English Commodore towards the Portuguese Viceroy and General was not calculated to restore amity among the allies. The Portuguese accepted the liberal terms offered to them by the *Pesva* in the name of Sahu *Raja* (9th January 1722) and the English withdrew to Bombay. The alliance that had been heralded with so much eclat broke up without achieving anything.<sup>1</sup>

The war with the English continued with pauses at intervals. When pressed in other quarters Angre would wave the olive branch and express willingness to make peace. When the pressure eased, his ships would be once more active. In 1723 Angre was engaged in hostilities with the Savant of Vadi and was threatened by the Dutch. He offered to discuss peace terms with William Phipps, the new Governor of Bombay. Phipps haughtily turned down the proposal charging Angre with piracy ; before he could hear of any terms he asked the Maratha Commander to renounce war and as proof of his sincerity demanded immediate release of prisoners. This called forth Kanhoji's ire, he replied that " it little behoved merchants to say that his government was supported by violence, insults and piracies ; for the great Sivaji founded his kingdom by making war against four kings; and that he himself was but his humble disciple; that he was ever willing to favour the merchants trading according to the laws of his country", and offered to release the English prisoners if his men imprisoned by the English were set at liberty.<sup>2</sup> Though the negotiations did not bring peace an exchange of prisoners was effected in 1725. Kanhoji's last act of hostility against the English was the seizure of the Company's galley *King William* in 1728. He died on 4th July 1729.

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<sup>1</sup> Downing, *History of the Indian Wars*, pp. 53-57 and F. N. on p. 56; Biddulph, *Malabar Pirates*, pp. 174-180.

<sup>2</sup> Forest, Home Series, vol. II, pp. 37-41.

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### DEATH OF KANHOJI ANGRE.

The death of Kanhoji Angre forms a turning point in Anglo-Maratha relations which were all along marked with the greatest acerbity on both sides. Angre's restless energy, resourcefulness and daring had brought the Maratha Navy to a high pitch of efficiency and developed it into a powerful striking force. His authority was supreme in Kohkan and his exclusive writ ran in that region. Though his rivals affected to speak of him as a "Corsair", they saw in him the representative of Maratha authority, the symbol of a mighty nation that appeared to be destined to take the place of the Moghal. If they dreaded his ships, they dreaded more the might of the Maratha state that stood behind them.

### DISPUTES IN ANGRE'S FAMILY.

Kanhoji's death brought about a change in the situation and resulted in new alignments. The Angre family was riven with disputes. Kanhoji's immediate successor Sekhoji, the most capable and sanes among his sons, died within a short period of his appointment (1733 August). His remaining family, Sambhaji, Manaji, and Tulaji and others, were all self-willed obstinate youths who quarrelled violently among themselves and invited outside intervention. The intemperate behaviour of Sambhaji Angre towards the King and his powerful *Pesva*, the grasping and domineering attitude of the latter with his subtle intrigues brought about the downfall of the Angre family and with it the ruin of the Maratha navy and gave the English the opportunity to deliver its first deadly blow against Maratha power.

Sambhaji Angre succeeded to the Admiralty in 1733, September. A very capable man, he was rough of speech and rough of manners. Manaji soon fell foul with him and opened negotiations with the Portuguese and the English to support his claim against his brother. The English naturally welcomed the opportunity of weakening the Angre and despatched Capt. Inchbird to Caul (December 1734), to encourage Manaji in his evil designs. It was very advantageous to them to keep up the dissensions between the brothers and thereby divide their force; they therefore authorised their agent to offer Manaji money and military stores and instructed him "to spirit up Manaji to carry on his resentments against his brother."<sup>1</sup>

Manaji Angre's agents also met *Pesva* Baji Rav, whom Sambhaji had greatly offended by his recalcitrance. The *Pesva* saw in the family discord an opportunity to humiliate his opponent, reduce the Angre power and make it subservient to his authority. He decided that the fleet and territories of Kanhoji Angre should be divided between his protege Manaji and Sambhaji; that Manaji should hold independent charge of Kolaba<sup>2</sup> and Sambhaji that of Suvarnadurg. The arrangement ousted Sambhaji permanently from his northern posses-

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<sup>1</sup> *Kavyetihās Sangraha Patre Yadi*, 23(1930, Ed.), S. P. D. III, 112 and xxxiii, 147, 159, 165, 245, 264, 274, 437. Also *Public Dept Diary*, vol. VII, Consultations, dated 22nd November 1734 and December.

<sup>2</sup> Rajwade—*Marathyañcya Itihasaci Sadhane*, II, pp. 71-72.

sions and confined him to the barren tract of the Ratnagiri district. Sambhaji retained his father's title of *Sarkhel*, but it no longer stood for the principal command of the navy. Sambhaji naturally resented this decision and was never reconciled to the partition.<sup>1</sup> As the more daring and active among the brothers his removal from the vicinity of Bombay, gave satisfaction to the English. They had all these years meekly submitted to the insults of Angre and were now happy at the turn of events. They accepted Manaji as lesser of the two evils and readily assisted him to keep the feud alive. The *Pesva* had humbled not only the pride of the Angre house but had the Angre's fief in his grip. A new English-*Pesva*-Manaji axis was established to curb Sambhaji Angre and keep him away from Kolaba. This friendly understanding was the note of the next two decades and lasted till Angre's power was completely overthrown in 1756.

With the conquest of Salsette and Bassein by Cimaji Appa in 1739, the *Pesva* and the English became near neighbours and found it necessary to know each other intimately and cultivate a closer understanding. They despatched two embassies, one to Sahu *Raja* at Satara and the other to Cimaji Appa at Bassein, to acquaint themselves with the aims and working of the Maratha Court and assess the strength of their new neighbour.

#### EMBASSIES OF GORDON AND INCHBIRD.

The first embassy was headed by Capt. Gordon. The object of the embassy as Capt. Gordon's letter of instructions informed him, was to gain information and insight into the Government interests and designs of the Maratha Court. The envoy was to obtain knowledge of the state of Sahu *Rajas* Government and to discover who were Baji Rav's enemies at the Court and how much they were to be depended on. "It will not be amiss," the Board writes, "if you see a proper occasion and opening to instill a jealousy of his ambition and growing power by the accession of his conquests". Gordon left Bombay on the 12th May 1739 and arrived in Sahu *Rajas* camp near Miraj on 1st June. He found the atmosphere at the Court not unfriendly and the *Raja* willing to do the English good offices; but his good offices counted for little as the *Pesva* was all powerful and made small account of the *Raja*. Gordon was not able to discover the real intentions of Baji Rav, but the general view was that he had no designs of molesting Bombay as it was esteemed useful for advancing the prosperity of his new acquisitions.

Capt. Inchbird's embassy to Cimaji Appa was much more successful. Inchbird's mission was meant to disarm Maratha jealousy for having aided the Siddi and the Portuguese in their late wars against

<sup>1</sup> Br. Ch. 326-328 and Rajwade, III, 272, 278.

<sup>2</sup> The accounts of the two embassies are given by Forrest in *The Selections from the Letters, Despatches and other State papers, Maratha Series*, vol. I, Part I, pp. 67-84.



the Marathas, to discourage any demand for tribute and yet to impress the Maratha General with the sincere desire of the English to cultivate a good understanding with their new neighbours. Inchbird spoke to the Maratha Council of the importance of encouraging foreign trade to make their country prosperous. He succeeded in arranging the terms of a treaty, dated 12th July 1739 which was ratified at Bombay. It was not the first engagement of its kind as alleged by Forrest and Aitchison, but marks a land-mark in Anglo-Maratha relations. It regulated trade between Bombay and the Maratha Country and navigation of the Mahim River. By it the *Pesva* conceded to the English free trade in his dominions.<sup>1</sup>

#### ANGLO PESHVA AMITY.

A year after the conclusion of the treaty, *Pesva* Baji Rav died. He was succeeded by his eldest son Balaji Baji Rav more commonly called Nana Saheb. The policy of his father on the west coast remained unchanged. The new *Pesvas* servants in Konkan pursued their master's interests with great vehemence and continued to squeeze Angres—Manaji, Sambhaji and their successors—out of their land possessions, contributing materially to the success of the English navy at sea over their rival. The position of the Angres grew more and more precarious. In spite of the exhortations of the great Sivaji that the navy should meet its upkeep from the central exchequer and not depend on its earnings at sea for its sustenance,<sup>2</sup> it was driven to a course of indiscriminate plunder by its necessities. Sahu unable to aid the fleet with money, had shown wisdom in accepting the advice of his Minister Balaji Visvanath to sustain the fleet by marking Konkan as Angre's sphere of influence and giving him a free rein in that field. The advent of *Pesvas* power in the Angre's field—the domineering views of Baji Rav and his son and the failure of the Angre brothers in coming to an understanding among themselves and their neighbours, upset the arrangement, isolated the naval command and dried up the resources of the Maratha fleet. The destruction of Angre's navy in 1756, was not a sudden catastrophe but the culmination of the policy initiated and worked out by the *Pesva* since 1735.

In the discussion over the Portuguese treaty, Cimaji Appa conveyed to the English envoy that “both the Angres were pirates, robbers, senseless impolitic fellows”. Inchbird agreed, saying “they were past all cure and it was labour in vain to reclaim them”. Cimaji told the envoy that “if the English were ready to act in co-operation with a Maratha force to destroy the pirate next season he would himself come down, and join the English in taking all Angre's forts and country.”<sup>3</sup> The treaty ending the war with the Portuguese contained an article which provided for joint action for destroying the Angre.

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<sup>1</sup> *Forrest, Maratha Series*, Ed. by Forrest, pp. 71-74, *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, ed. by Aitchison, vol. II, pp. 9-13, (1931, Ed.).]

<sup>2</sup> *Adnyapatra*, p. 34 (1826, Ed.).

<sup>3</sup> *Pub. Dept. Diary*, XIII, pp. 330-339.



In 1740 March, Sambhaji Angre suddenly appeared before Kolaba, landed troops and with little opposition “ seized all the ports and strong places in consequence of secret understanding with Manaji’s officers, only Kolaba and one small out-fort holding out for Manaji”. Sambhaji sent a message to his brother that he was visiting Alibag to pay respects to his father’s *samadhi*. The prospect of Sambhaji establishing himself at Kolaba and obliging the Company to increase their Marine force (the expense of which is already intolerant) to secure the navigation of the coast” was altogether unpalatable to the Bombay Council. They immediately despatched relief to Manaji under Captain Inchbird and anxiously watched the issue of the contest. In the meanwhile a large force under Cimaji Appa also arrived at Kolaba to support Manaji in the struggle. Caught between two fires Sambhaji Angre had little chance of escaping. He was fortunately aided out of the impasse by Manaji himself who to his dismay found his ally and patron occupying his forts of Karanja, Elephanta, Pali Mirgad and making himself free with his territory round these strongholds. Sambhaji, surrendering the places seized by him, quickly slipped away and repaired to the *Rajas* court to lodge a complaint against the *Pesva*’s high handed action. Nothing apparently came out of the visit, Sambhaji returning a disappointed man.<sup>1</sup>

The Kolaba incident served to cement further the union between the English and the Marathas (the *Pesva*). “ Acting on Capt. Inchbird’s report that the Marathas were too jealous of Sambhaji’s power and so many hostilities had already past between them, that they were bent to reducing him and would attack him as soon as a proper season would allow of their entering upon the action and were very pressing to gain a declaration of the Company’s intention”, the Bombay Council decided “that it could not do better than embrace the Maratha. (the *Pesva*’s) party and assist them in any expedition against him, so far as its forces would permit. By such a step it felt it would contribute to the humbling of a resolute bold enemy and also benefit by such events as their enmity might present it.”<sup>2</sup> Cimaji Appa who had conducted these negotiations died in December 1740, and Sambhaji’s annual incursions remained unchecked. He seized the *Resolution* returning to Bombay from Surat and caused quite a panic. He died a year later on 12th January 1742.

#### **TULAJI ANGRE**

Manaji Angre ended with becoming a satellite of the *Pesva*. Tulaji his half-brother and successor to Sambhaji Angre’s title, fleet and the barren kingdom of South Konkan—suffered worse fate. Tulaji was active and brave but haughty and altogether lacking in political foresight. His reckless courage and daring seamanship proved his

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<sup>1</sup> Br. Ch. 56, *Pub. Dept. Diary*, XIII, B. 218-238, 253-260.

<sup>2</sup> *Pub. Dept. Diary*, XIII, B. pp. 305-306.

undoing. Claiming that he was a servant of the Crown he looked on himself as a peer of the *Pesva* and refused to bend his knee before the latter. The *Pesva* had usurped the authority of the crown; his hostility placed Tulaji in the position of a rebel against the State. The *Sarkhel* while feigning allegiance to the puppet monarch at Satara, followed a line of action dictated by his personal needs and selfish interests. To subsist his army he entered into a war with the Savant of Vadi at the end of 1746 and gained successes in the initial stages. But in 1748, the Savant with the *Pesva*'s aid defeated him with heavy loss at Kudal, and drove him out.<sup>1</sup> A third raid by Tulaji about 1750, was also successfully beaten back. His attempt against the chiefs of Visalgad and Bavda met with a similar fate.<sup>2</sup> To keep alive his fleet he raided Malabar ports and preyed on merchant shipping. His activities on land and at sea made him repugnant to all his neighbours—Maratha chiefs of Visalgad, Bavda, Kolhapur and Vadi and the foreign maritime powers—the English, the Portuguese and the Dutch. The *Pesva* in his capacity as the head of the State and the supreme law-giver, took it upon himself to champion the cause of the smaller chieftains and entered into alliance with the English 'to subdue and demolish Tulaji Angre'.

Tulaji Angre was not unaware of the clouds gathering over his head. In October 1754, he sent his agents to the Bombay Council with a proposal for accommodating their long standing differences. The terms he offered were liberal enough to be acceptable. But the English would hear none of it. They flatly refused to recognise Angre's right to issue passes for their trading vessels, insisted on the restoration of all the ships seized by him and called on him to send them men of consequence to treat of peace.<sup>3</sup> The reply clearly indicated that the English were in no mood to accommodate and Angre could expect no quarter from them.

The *Pesva* by 1754, had made himself master of the Konkan with the exception of the coastline. If Angre would not go before him as a suppliant, would not respect his flag, there was no place for him in the Maratha confederacy. With the *Pesva* and Ramaji Mahadev, his *Subhedar* of Salsette, destruction of Angre and his navy became an obsession. All the objections and fears of the English, Ramaji Pant overcame by his arguments and by making them large concessions.<sup>4</sup> On 19th March 1755, was concluded the agreement for

<sup>1</sup> S. P. D., XXIV, Nos. 86, 101, 98, 103, 99, 110, 115, 30, 113, 41, XXXIV, 34, Count of Aloma's report, pp. 203-206; History of Savantvadi, *Ratnagiri Gazetteer*, 1880, p. 441.

<sup>2</sup> S. P. D. XXIV, 20 25, *Pant Pratinidhi Bakhar in Bharat Varsa*, Vol. I, p. 56 ; *Gode Family Bakhar and Battle of Mudagad*, J. U. B., Vol. V, Part IV, *Gode Family Bakhar and Battle of Mudagad*, J. U. B., vol. V, Part IV, *sahu Roznisi*, 225-229, 236 and 240.

<sup>3</sup> *Pub. Dept. Diary*, Volume 27 (1754), pp. 309-315.

<sup>4</sup> S. P. D., XIL, 115.

making a joint assault on Angre's strongholds. The English squadron sailed out of Bombay under Commodore James and at Caul was joined by the Maratha fleet. On 29th, they arrived before Suvarnadurga and opening a terrific bombardment carried the place on 4th April. The lateness of the season held up operations for another year. Gheria and Vijayadurg were assaulted by the fleet under Admiral Watson on 11th February 1756. A chance shell fell among Angre's fleet which had been drawn up in the river and set on fire the *Restoration* grab. It spread to other ships and before long the whole of Angre's fleet was on fire and was completely burnt out. At right the Admiral landed his troops to get between the town and the Maratha camp. About four in the afternoon of the 13th, the attack was renewed and the garrison flung out the flag of truce. The English troops marched in, took possession of the place and hoisted their flag. The destruction of Angre's power was complete. His entire fleet, which had been the terror of the coast for half a century's had gone up in a blaze. Angre became a prisoner in his enemy's hands, was sent to Poona and remained in custody till his death in 1786. The fort of Vijayadurg was plundered of all its accumulated treasure by the English and handed over to the *Pesva* six months later after tedious negotiations. The *Pesva* crushed his rival on the coast but in doing so lost the navy.

#### **GROWING ANGLO-MARATHA TENSION.**

The extermination of Tulaji Angre closed the chapter of Anglo- Maratha friendship. Though a new treaty concluded in the October of 1756, gave exclusive commercial advantages to the British in addition to a few villages round about Bankot or Fort Victoria, the English could not be persuaded to accede to the *Pesvas* request for help in his Karnatak and Hindustan projects. The all-round expansion of Maratha power was viewed by the British with greatest anxiety and if they did not pursue active measures to prevent it, they refused to be a party to it. The relations between the *Pesva* and the English became less and less cordial. The acquisition of Surat by the English in 1759 and their support of the Siddi of Janjira in his struggle against the *Pesvas* navy so infuriated the Poona Government that it refused to transact business with the mission sent to Poona under Price in the August of 1759.<sup>1</sup>

A year and half after the visit of the mission a terrible disaster overtook the *Pesva* in Hindustan. At the battle of Panipat in 1761, the *Pesva's* main army led by his cousin and his son was annihilated by the Afghan marauder Ahmad Sah Abdali aided by Najib Khan Rohilia and other Indian Muslim chieftains. Maratha power in Northern India was destroyed and Maratha prestige received a fatal blow. The defeat at Panipat was followed by the death of Balaji Rav *Pesva* and the outbreak of civil war between his minor son Madhav Rav and his brother Raghoba. The *Pesva's* neighbours became restless and seized large parts of his dominions.

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<sup>1</sup> Forrest, *Maratha Series*, Vol. I, pp. 125-138.

While Maratha affairs were thus in a declining posture the fortunes of the East India Company were on the ascendant. The end of the Anglo-French struggle in January 1761, had left the British without a foreign rival on the Indian continent. Their victory over the *Navab* of Bengal (1757) and subsequent revolutions engineered by them had put the richest Indian province at their command and provided them with a convenient base from which to march to the heart of Hindustan. From a trading concern the Company had risen to the position of a first-rate power and was now competing with the Marathas for the political leadership of India. Nothing could have suited their ambitious views better than to see their opponents weakened by losses and riven by civil war. Growing coolness marked the next phase of Anglo-Maratha relations which lasted from 1756 to 1774.

The difficulties of Poona Government encouraged ambitious views in the Bombay Council. When envoys arrived at Bombay from Raghoba during the monsoon of 1761, the Bombay Council welcomed the mission as giving them an opportunity for acquiring the islands of Salsette and Bassein, "not so much for advantages expected from revenue, as advanced positions necessary to the security of the island and harbour of Bombay". Raghoba offered to make cessions in Gujarat for British aid in arms, but as Salsette did not find a place in the cessions the talks ended inconclusively.

Madhav Rav *Pesva* during his short regime showed wonderful resourcefulness and under his leadership the Marathas recovered rapidly. By 1767, the embers of civil war laid low, the *Nizam* was humbled and professed friendship ; Janoji Bhosle who had been a source of great trouble was brought to book and made to disgorge his ill-gotten gains; above all Haidar Ali the most active enemy of the Marathas was soundly beaten in several campaigns and abandoned much of the territory seized by him and agreed to pay a tribute of 33 lakhs of rupees. The President of the Bombay Council writing in November 1767 "lamented the growing power of the Marathas and felt that nothing should be left undone to check it as much as possible". An embassy was sent to Poona under Thomas Mostyn to learn the designs and sound the disposition of the Maratha Court and persuade it to join the English against Haider Ali. Mostyn soon discovered that there was little possibility of the Marathas making common cause with Haidar Ali and did not press for a closer alliance.

The embassy sent its agent, Charles Brome, to Raghoba at Nasik to discover what advantages he was prepared to make to the English. Raghoba expressed his resentment that his nephew did not leave him any share in the administration but had no definite proposals to offer.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 140-176.

Mostyn once more visited Poona in 1772, September under instructions of the Home authorities “to negotiate for certain advantages for the settlement in the Malabar and also for the cession of the island and peninsula of Salsette and Bassein which added so much to the security and value of Bombay and penetrate Maratha designs which might affect the Company’s possessions in Bengal or Carnatic”. The period of Mostyn’s third embassy lasted till the December of 1774 and was full of momentous events at Poona—the death of Madhav Rav *Pesva*, murder of Narayan Rav and the revolutions in the Poona Government. Mostyn’s reports convinced his masters that the time had come to strike the blow for the possession of Salsette and that the seizure of the island amidst the confusion that reigned at the Maratha capital, would pass unnoticed. An expedition under General Gordon and Superintendent Watson suddenly appeared before Thana, assaulted the fort and occupied the island on 23rd December 1774. Rumours of a Portuguese fleet threatening Salsette was given as the excuse for the English attack.

The seizure of Salsette was an act of wanton aggression and formed one of the causes of Anglo-Maratha hostilities that ensued in the year following. But the main reason for the outbreak was Raghoba’s invitation to the Bombay Council to support his claim to the *Pesvaship* against the *Barbhais* or the council of Poona ministers. Raghoba was neither a diplomat nor a soldier and never popular at Poona Court. The defeat of Panipat and the consequent death of Balaji Rav *Pesva* had dragged this small man from obscurity and put him in a position of command. As the sole surviving elderly member of the *Peava*’s house he looked upon himself as the guardian of his young nephews and in that capacity proposed to keep the reins of administration in his hands. This was resented and led to friction and open war between the uncle and the nephew.

#### **AFFAIRS AT THE MARATHA COURT.**

Madhav Rav *Pesva* died in November 1772 and was succeeded by his younger brother Narayan Rav. Differences soon appeared between the new *Pesva* and his uncle and led to the murder of the between by the adherents of Raghoba. Raghoba now became the *Pesva*. Though he denied complicity in the crime his action in rewarding the ring-leaders and putting them in positions of trust belied Raghoba’s word and combined with his general unpopularity, to draw on him the odium of the entire Maratha *Darbar* and Maratha people. The repulsion felt for the perpetrator of such a heinous crime took the form of a plot to oust him from the *Pesvaship* and run it in the name of a son of Narayan Rav, natural born or adopted. Raghoba’s old friend and chief adviser Sakharam Bapu, inspired the main idea and took the lead in the formation of the league of the *Barbhais*. Maratha chieftains were informed by letters of Raghoba having been



dismissed from the *Pesvaship* and of the Council of ministers having taken over the administration in the name of the widow of the murdered *Pesva*.<sup>1</sup>

Large desertion in his army and the reports of the plot brought by his spies roused Raghoba to the danger that was threatening him. He had gone to Karnatak to deal with Haidar Ali's aggressions. But the danger at home now required his attention. Patching up a treaty with Haidar Ali he turned towards Poona. At Kaseganv near Pandharpur on 26th March 1774, he defeated an army of the ministerial party led by Trimbak Rav Pethe. Other armies barred his path to Poona. Raghoba broke his ground and fled northward to seek support from Sinde and Holkar.

The birth of a male child to the widow of Narayan Rav *Pesva*, who was pregnant at the time of her husband's death, in April 1774, put an end to Raghoba's hopes of ever regaining the *Pesvaship*. Sinde whom he had approached (May 1774), to mediate in the dispute suggested that Raghoba should receive a *jagir* worth ten lakhs of rupees and two forts, that he should be helped to pay off his troops to enable him to dismiss them and that the two ministers, Sakharam Bapu and Nana Phadnis, should come to Burhanpur to discuss further details in a personal meeting. The ministers agreed and moved towards Burhanpur in November. Raghoba was not prepared to accept any compromise that left him no share in the administration. His talks with the ministerial party convinced him he could expect no further concessions from them. On 10th December, he bolted and fled towards Gujarat, where he was joined by Govind Rav Gaikvad.

#### **FIRST ANGLO-MARATHA WAR.**

Negotiations for Military aid had been opened with the English at Surat by Raghoba's agents quite a year back; a draft treaty making large concessions to them in Gujarat had been drawn up in September 1774. With Haripant Phadke threatening to encircle him in Gujarat, Raghoba renewed his solicitations. He was defeated on 17th February 1775 in the battle of Mahi (near Arras), and fled by way of Cambay and Bhavnagar to Surat. On 6th March, was concluded the treaty by which the English agreed to support his cause with a force of 2500 troops with a due proportion of artillery. Raghoba among other things agreed to cede to the Company in perpetuity Bassein with its dependencies, the island of Salsette and other islands adjacent to Bombay, Jambusar and Olpad *parganas* in Gujarat and the *Pesvas* share of revenue of Ankalesvar. For the expenses of the troops he was to pay a lakh and a half of rupees monthly and by way of security deposited with the Company jewellery worth six lakhs.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. P. D., V, pp. 12, 20, 24, 26, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Forrest, Maratha Series, I, pp. 211-215. The first Maratha war can be followed in detail in Forrest's Selections Maratha Series and Khare's *Aitihāsik Lekha Sangraha*, vol. VII and Historical papers on Mahadji Sinde.

The Bombay Council as remarked previously was anxious to emulate the example of Bengal and Madras to obtain political ascendancy at Poona and make the presidency pay its way by means of increased revenue. But its plans were very badly laid, the means adopted proved quite inadequate for the ends in view and Maratha resistance proved far more stubborn than what had been imagined from English experience in Bengal and Kanatak.

Colonel Keating who had arrived at Surat about the end of February at the head of the British detachment, joined Raghoba on the conclusion of the treaty of Surat and both sailed to Cambay for the purpose of forming a junction with Raghoba's defeated army that had fallen back on Kapadvanj. The season had advanced and Raghoba wanted to remain in Gujarat during the monsoon. The British were however anxious to push south in the direction of Poona at once. The march of the confederate army southward was challenged and impeded at every stage by the forces under the command of Haripant Phadke. Several inconclusive actions were fought of which the battle of Arras, claimed as a victory by the British, cost them two hundred and twenty men of whom eighty-six were Europeans and eleven of them officers. The allies could make little progress after the battle and went into cantonment at Dabhoi for the rainy season.

#### **TREATY OF PURANDAR.**

While both parties were preparing for renewal of hostilities after the rains the Supreme Government in Calcutta intervened disapproving in strongest terms the policy and measures of the Bombay Council in supporting Raghoba. They declared the war as "impolitic, dangerous, unauthorised and unjust". "you have imposed on yourself", they wrote, "the charge of conquering the whole Maratha empire for a man who appears incapable of affording you any effectual assistance in it."<sup>1</sup> They sent Col. Upton to Purandar near Poona to negotiate a treaty with the minister and put, an end to hostilities. Upton was in Maratha camp for three months and concluded an agreement on 1st March 1776, which dissolved the British alliance with Raghoba, Provided for the retention of Salsette by them, secured them Broach and the surrounding territory and promised a subsidy of twelve lakhs of rupees for the expenditure incurred on the troops. Raghoba was to disband his troops and reside at Koparganv on the Godavari; expenditure of his household to the amount of ten lakhs was guaranteed.<sup>2</sup>

The treaty of Purandar was in no way dishonourable to either party. For the Marathas the chief gain was the dissolution of the British alliance with Raghoba. Once the English abandoned his cause, Raghoba would be isolated and cease to be the source of

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<sup>1</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 277-280.

infinite trouble that he had proved so far. The English had gained their main objective—Salsette and the islands adjacent to Bombay— which they had always held as of great strategic value. If both parties had been sincere in their professions peace would have followed the conclusion of the treaty. But in Raghoba the Bombay Council had found a pliable instrument to increase their influence in the Maratha Court. To surrender him to the ministerial party and abandon their recent gains in territory worth twenty-lakhs of rupees was for the Bombay Council too bitter a pill to swallow. Despatches received from the Court of Directors about this time encouraged the Council in its recalcitrant attitude. Instead of abandoning Raghoba's cause it sheltered him first at Surat and then at Bombay, allowed his troops to remain in the city of Surat, afforded asylum to the partisans of the imposter of Sadasiv Rav Bhau and secret encouragement to intrigues at Poona. The Poona ministers retaliated by refusing to fulfil their part of the treaty. They declined payment of the twelve lakhs that had been stipulated, nor would they surrender any territory near Broach. As counterpoise to the British they pretended to entertain seriously proposals presented to them by a Frenchman Mons de St. Lubin on behalf of his Government.

England's colonies in America were at this time in revolt against the mother country. France looked on this as an excellent opportunity of retaliating for the injuries suffered during the seven years war and freely gave her assistance to the colonists. The appearance of a French agent at Poona greatly alarmed the Supreme Government at Calcutta and it readily fell in with the views of the Bombay Council to support the cause of Raghoba; setting aside the treaty of Purandar a force was despatched from Bengal and another march upon Poona in support of Raghoba was sanctioned.

#### **RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES—BRITISH DEFEAT AT VADGAON.**

Elated at the success of its views the Bombay Council immediately fitted an expedition to take Raghoba to Poona. It would not wait for the Bengal detachment to arrive in the Deccan. Reports of dissensions among the Poona ministers and the appearance of a party supposed to favour Raghoba's cause hastened its preparations. An army consisting of five hundred Europeans, three thousand sepoy and three hundred gun lascars attended by Raghoba and a party of irregular horse set out on the road to Poona on 25th November 1778. By 20th December the force had ascended the Bhore Ghat, but saw no sign of Maratha allies that were to join Raghoba. By painful marches it pushed forward to Talegaon in another three weeks. This however proved the limit.

“ The hopes which the Bombay Council had formed of a general rising in favour of Raghoba were grievously disappointed. The scheme of pushing into the heart of the Maratha empire, the British discovered was a difficult one to accomplish.”. Nana Phadnis with Mahadjis aid had put down the faction that had invited Raghoba to

Poona and impeded the progress of the English army with fifty thousand seasoned troops. The small British force was sniped at on its march and cut off from its rear. When it reached the village of Taleghav it found the place completely reduced to ashes. The English Commander realising his mistake attempted withdrawal. But retreat was now too late and no longer practicable. On 17th January 1779 was signed the convention of Vadgahv, by which the English Commander accepted to surrender Raghoba, abandon Salsette and all territory acquired since 1772 and countermand the march of the Bengal Detachment. The convention was to be later ratified by the Bombay Government.

The convention of Vadgahv was at once repudiated by the Bombay Government and the Supreme Government supported their action. The Bombay Council realized its mistake in underrating the strength of the Maratha empire and the need of retrieving its mistake immediately if further disaster was to be avoided. But its army had returned defeated, its treasury was exhausted, its credit gone and its reputation tarnished. The Council's hope lay in obtaining reinforcements from Bengal. Fortunately for it Col. Goddard who had replaced Leslie in command of the Bengal Detachment in October 1778, received information of the disaster that had befallen the Bombay force while he lay encamped at Burhanpur (30th January 1779) and pushing with all possible haste, reached Surat on 26th February. Raghoba who had surrendered at Vadgahv and was being escorted to Jhansi eluded his guard and reached Surat in June. Bengal also sent other detachments to strike at the north-east corner of Malva and create a powerful diversion in favour of Goddard.

#### **QUADRUPLE ALLIANCE AGAINST THE BRITISH.**

Nana Phadnis who had now become the sole authority in the Poona Government prepared to meet the situation. He formed a grand coalition of almost, all Indian powers against the British. The native princes, the *Nizam*, Haidar Ali, the *Navab* of Oudh and others all had become painfully alive to the aggressive designs of the British and the *Nizam* mooted the idea of a general alliance against them. Nana Phadnis immediately accepted the idea and by large cessions in Karnatak to Haidar Ali won him over to the design. While the Marathas would engage the English in the Western part of the peninsula, Haidar Ali was to attack the English in South Karnatak, the *Nizam* was to send an army to the Northern *Sarkars* and the Bhosle of Nagpur to invade Bengal.<sup>1</sup> In the end though the *Nizam* remained supine and Bhosle was bribed into inactivity, the Marathas and Haider Ali waged war so bitterly as to bring the British to the verge of ruin.

Goddard made a half-hearted attempt to end hostilities on the basis of the treaty of Purandar with an additional stipulation for the exclusion of the French from Maratha dominions. Nana Phadnis insisted on the fulfilment of the Vadgahv engagement and surrender

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<sup>1</sup> Hist. Papers of Mahadji Sinde, pp. 83, 92-96.

of Raghoba and war was renewed at the end of the year. To make the war pay for itself Fateh Singh Gaikwad was lured into an alliance (26th January 1780) on condition of ceding to the Company his districts south of the Tapi and aiding the British with three thousand horses. Dabhoi surrendered on 20th January and Ahmadabad was captured on 15th February after severe fighting. Sinde and Holkar had by now arrived in Gujarat and Goddard turned southward to meet them. The superiority of the British in artillery prevented close engagements ; the Maratha horse, hovered round the enemy's camp hanging on his flanks, cutting off his supplies and attacking his lines of communications. Goddard was not prepared for this war of attrition and tried to surprise the Maratha camp under cover of night twice (3 April and 19 April) but the results were indecisive. The Bombay Government which was impatient for results recalled the Bombay Detachment and heavy fighting took place in Konkan. Kalyan, Parsik, Belapur, were seized by Capt. Campbell in May. Malanggad was threatened. An attempt made by Nana Phadnis to recover Kalyan was foiled by Capt. Hartley.

As soon as the rains ceased Goddard arrived at Bombay and marched his troops to the siege of Bassein. The fort was assaulted on 11th December and on the next day a force under Ramcandra Canes that attempted relief was defeated by Hartley. Pressed to force a decision Goddard attempted a march on Poona. His advance guard reached Khandala on 8th February (1781) and Goddard himself followed it with the main force. Nana Phadnis showed no inclination to yield to the threat and treat with the English ; a large army took up a menacing position in the Maval hills and another pouring through other Konkan passes began to harass Goddard's supply columns. To avoid another Vadganv, Goddard hastily retired at the end of April suffering heavy losses in men and stores.

The diversion created by Hastings in the north-east corner of Sinde's possessions succeeded but partially. Mahadji Sinde withdrew from Gujarat to Ujjain for the defence of his dominion, but was too late to save Gwalior which was carried by a brilliant night escalade on 3rd August 1780. This fortress was of great strategic value and its loss naturally dismayed Mahadji Sinde. The Rana of Gohad and the Bundela chief of Narvar joined the British and negotiations were opened with other Jat and Rajput princes to join the British standard. Another and a still larger force under Col. Camac invaded Malva and with the aid of its allies advanced by way of Sipri to Sironj. Its further progress was halted here and Camac finding himself in a difficult corner, decided to fall back. The retreat was marked with daily losses and Camac's force stood in danger of being cut off. On the night of 24th March however, Camac surprised Sinde's camp and took away his main standard and a number of guns. Col. Muir now joined Camac with reinforcements and took the command. No further advantage could be obtained by the



British; they were frequently straitened for supplies by numerous bodies of horse from Sinde's camp which continued to hover round. Fighting ceased as the north Indian summer advanced.

### **TREATY OF SALBYE.**

Both parties were now weary of the war. Haidar Ali who had invaded Karnatak carried everything before him and appeared at the gates of Madras. The English troops sent to oppose him were surrounded and almost annihilated. A French squadron under Suffren appeared on the Coromandel coast. Distracted by difficulties Hastings appealed to Sinde to make peace. A truce was concluded by Col. Muir on 13th October 1781 and the final treaty was signed at Salbye on 17th May 1782.

The treaty of Salbye consisted of seventeen articles; the main articles provided for the withdrawal of British support to Raghoba and restoration of all British conquests in Gujarat and Malva subsequent to the treaty of Purandar; Haidar Ali was to restore the territories he had taken from the British; all Europeans, except the English and the Portuguese, were to be excluded from the Maratha dominions. Sinde was given Broach and he stood guarantee for the due fulfilment of the terms of the treaty.<sup>1</sup>

The treaty of Salbye was indeed a triumph for the diplomatic genius of Nana Phadnis. The British object of putting their nominee on the *Pesvaship* and gaining control of Maratha politics was frustrated. Marathas at this period as Lyall puts it, "proved too strong and too well united to be shaken or overawed by such forces as the British could despatch against them."<sup>2</sup> Lt. Col. Luard when he writes in the Cambridge History "that the treaty established the dominance of the British as controlling factor in Indian Politics" is anticipating events.

### **INTERLUDE OF UNEASY PEACE.**

The twenty years following the conclusion of the treaty of Salbye formed an interlude of uneasy peace. The Court of Directors declared in a pontifical manner "that they were completely satisfied with the possessions they already had and would engage in no war for the purpose of further acquisition and that they would never depart from that principle either in the condition then obtaining of the native powers or in any future revolutions amongst them. They allowed it to be known that peace was their primary object and that they would refrain from all interference in the contentions which might arise among the native princes unless called for by the stipulations of any existing treaty or by a threat of French interference."<sup>3</sup> These were admirable sentiments and perhaps the Directors were sincere in their professions. But with the bitter experience of British diplomacy and of the activities of the Company's servants on the scene of action the native princes of India, least of all the Maratha Government, could bring themselves to believe in the pacific disposition of the Company.

<sup>1</sup> Aitchison, *Treaties*, etc., vol. VII, pp. 39-43.

<sup>2</sup> Lyall, Sir Alfred, *British Dominion in India*, p. 191.

<sup>3</sup> Poona Residency Correspondence Series, vol. II, p. 13.

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Lord Cornwallis' refusal to aid the Poona Government against Tipu Sultan in 1786 caused much heartburning and led to coolness between the two Governments. The Governor General's unwillingness, however, to take advantage of Sindé's difficulties in his war with the Rajputs in 1787 and the strict neutral policy that he followed in the crisis of his affairs next year went a long way to improve mutual relations. In 1790 the Poona Government entered into an alliance with the British to reduce Tipu's overgrown power. The remarks of Malet reflect correctly if somewhat uncharitably Maratha attitude in this war. "The grand object of our allies (the Marathas) is to reap as much benefit as possible from the war and to stimulate Tipu's and our exertions to the exhaustion of our mutual force so that they may become the arbiter of future negotiations."<sup>1</sup> At the conclusion of the peace, however, the statesmanship of Lord Cornwallis did not fail to take care to see that "British enemies were crippled without making their friends formidable."

"The *Pesva* is our rival in power" remarks Malet in another place<sup>2</sup> and British diplomacy was cleverly directed to spread disaffection towards the Marathas among neighbouring princes, encourage mutual jealousies among the members of Maratha Confederacy and thus undermine Maratha power. The strength of the confederacy united under Nana Phadnis appeared irresistible to the Governor General in 1794 and deterred him from supporting the Nizam in his arrogant assumption of independence and rejection of Maratha claims on him. The result was the triumph of Maratha arms at Kharda and the reduction of the *Nizam* to the position of a subordinate.

#### **OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR AMONG MARATHAS.**

The fact of the matter was that so long as the two great Maratha leaders, Mahadji Sindé and Nana Phadnis lived and wielded authority, the Maratha Empire had a semblance of unity and pursued a common vigorous policy which kept its enemies in awe. But after the death of Mahadji Sindé in 1794 and that of Savai Madhav Rav in 1795 the Maratha State became a house divided against itself. Baji Rav Raghunath who succeeded to the *Pesvaship* in 1796, had imbibed such violent hatred for the minister who had sent his father into exile that he could never bring himself to trust him or feel himself safe while the Minister lived. Baji Rav intrigued and plotted to ruin Nana Phadnis and his partisans with the support of Daulat Rav Sindé (Mahadji's successor). Sindé's trained battalions brought the new *Pesva* success in the initial stages of the contest. Nana Phadnis was seized, thrown into prison and died in March 1800. But soon there was violent reaction against the imbecile conduct of the two unworthy chiefs. The Minister's partisans received unexpected aid from Yesvant Rav Holkar who rose against Daulat Rav's tyranny and his interference in Holkar's succession. In the battle of Hadapsar fought on 25th October 1802, the joint armies of the *Pesva* and Sindé were routed, the *Pesva* fled from Poona and there were prospects that Nana's partisans headed by Yesvant Rav Holkar would gain control at Poona.

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<sup>1</sup> P. R. C, vol. III, p. vi, 168.

<sup>2</sup> P. R. C, vol. II, p. 118.

**TREATY OF BASSEIN AND AFTER.**

Circumstances however shaped differently. The British now intervened and intervened much more effectively than in 1775. Lord Wellesley who had come to India as Governor-General abandoned the policy of neutrality and was determined to make British authority supreme in India. He had already crushed Tipu Sultan of Mysore and forced the *Nizam*, the *Navabs* of Oudh and Arcot into subordinate alliances with the Company. He had offered the subsidiary treaty to the *Pesva* four years back and now when the *Pesva* turned to him for aid it was readily granted. On 31st December 1802 was concluded the treaty of Bassein. The *Pesva* was to receive a subsidiary force of six battalions and to cede to the Company for their maintenance districts yielding twenty-six lakhs of rupees. He bound himself not to engage in hostilities, nor even to negotiate with other States without the permission of the British Government, and that Government was also to arbitrate his claims upon the Nizam and the Gaikvad. British troops reinstated the *Pesva* in his capital in May 1803.

The treaty of Bassein was the most disgraceful compact the Marathas ever concluded. It degraded the *Pesva* to the position of a vassal of the Company. It broke up for ever the Maratha confederacy which though loose and jarring, had a living sense of unity and a genuine, national sentiment behind it. The treaty gave the British control of the *Pesva's* country and resources. It ended once for all the contest for the sovereignty fought between the Marathas and the British. As Sidney Owen remarks "while previously to the conclusion of the treaty of Bassein there existed a British Empire in India the treaty by its direct and indirect operation, gave the Company the Empire of India".

The *Pesva's* action in signing the treaty and inviting the British for his protection shocked his friends much more than it surprised his enemies. Sinde, Bhosle, Holkar and other Maratha leaders would not tolerate the surrender of national independence by the idiotic *Pesva*. They prepared to sink their differences and make a common cause to resist the British threat. Wellesley's diplomacy however succeed in keeping alive the rift between Sinde and Holkar. In two swift campaigns very skilfully organized the armies of Sinde and Holkar were defeated and dispersed and the Maratha confederacy ceased to exist. The Maratha chiefs were left in a sullen mood but were helpless against the tide of the new forces. Their attempt to revive the on-federacy was effectively defeated by Hastings fifteen years later when the *Pesva* was sent into exile, his kingdom annexed and Sinde and Holkar accepted the position of tributary princes.

## CHAPTER 7\*

### BHOSLES OF NAGPUR

#### ORIGIN AND RISE.

THE BHOSLE FAMILY IS COUNTED AMONG THE ROYAL OR KSATRIYA CLANS of the Marathas. The Bhosle house to which *Chatrapati* Sivaji, the founder of Maratha Kingdom belonged, hailed from Verul near Daulatabad. The Bhosles of Nagpur are known as Hinganikar as one of their ancestors who was probably a contemporary of Maloji, the grandfather of *Chatrapati* Sivaji, rehabilitated the village Beradi near Hingani in the present district of Poona. The two brothers Mudhoji and Rupaji of Hingani-Beradi were contemporaries of Sahaji Bhosle, the father of Sivaji. Like *Chatrapati* Bhosle house, the Nagpur Bhosle family too, considers that it descended from the Sisodia Rajputs of Udaipur. It is quite possible that some *Ksatriya* clans of the Rajputs came down, to the Maratha country from the north during the long ascendancy of the Muslims. Nevertheless, it is a historical fact that there were *Ksatriya* families in the Maratha country like the Rastrakutas, the Calukyas and the Yadavas, who had no relationship with the Rajputs of the north.

The family tree in the *bakhar* of the Bhosles of Nagpur denotes ancestors who were common to this house and also to the Bhosle house of the *Chatrapatis*. The Bhosles of Nagpur and the *Chatrapati's* house belonged to the same *Ksatriya* clan. However, there is no independent historical evidence to establish common ancestry between the two families in the few generations preceding *Chatrapati* Sivaji. The account in the *bakhar* of the Bhosles of Nagpur, therefore, has to be taken with a grain of salt.

In the biography of *Chatrapati* Sambhaji by Malhar Ramrav Citnis it is stated that after the death of Sivaji his obsequies were performed by Sabaji Bhosle, as Sambhaji, the eldest son, was in confinement on the fort of Panhala. But James Grant Duff in his 'A History of the Marathas', Vol. I, p. 243, says that Sivaji's funeral rites were performed by one 'Shahjee Bhonslay' (Sahaji Bhosle). There is no unanimity among contemporary writers about the person performing Sivaji's funeral rites.

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\* This Chapter is contributed by Prof. B. K. Apte, Nagpur University, Nagpur.

If, however, Sabaji Bhosle performed the obsequies there is every possibility that this Bhosle, the ancestor of the famous Raghuji Bhosle of Nagpur was a known blood relation of the *Chatrapatis*. At the time of Sahu *Chatrapati*'s home-coming when Tarabai and her partisans purposely cast doubt about Sahu being the grandson of Sivaji, it was Parasoji of the Nagpur Bhosle house who dined with Sahu and dispelled the doubt. Then again during the last years of Sahu's reign it was strongly rumoured that he would select an heir to the *gadi* of Satara from the Bhosles of Nagpur as he had no soon. Later, the English offered to seat one of the Bhosle's of Nagpur on the *gadi* of Satara. All these events indicate the possibility of a common ancestor of the Bhosles of Satara and Nagpur though direct historical evidence is not yet forthcoming to establish the fact.

The two Bhosle brothers, Mudhoji and Rupaji were contemporaries of Sahaji Bhosle and were noted roving soldiers.<sup>1</sup> Rupaji, it seems was residing at Bham in the district of Yavatmal, where he had a *jagir*<sup>2</sup>. He was childless. Of the sons of Mudhoji, Parasoji and Sabaji stayed with their uncle at Bham and served in the army of *Chatrapati* Sivaji.

#### PARASOJI BHOSLE.

Parasoji seems to have gained some distinction by his inroads into the territories of Berar and Gondavana during the reign of Sivaji. He exacted tribute from these regions. After Sambhaji's death when Rajaram succeeded to the throne of the *Chatrapati*, Parasoji rendered him valuable help. In appreciation of his services Rajaram honoured Parasoji by presenting him robes, *jari-pataka* and title of '*Sena Saheb Subha*'. Gondavana, Devagad, Canda and Berar from where he had exacted tribute were given to his charge<sup>3</sup>. Parasoji was the first of the Bhosles of Nagpur to have received this honorific title. This grant was made in 1699 A.D.<sup>4</sup>

When Sahu was released by the Moghals, Parasoji was the first of the Maratha nobles to join him. Parasoji dined with Sahu in the same dish to dispel the doubt of the latter's royal descent. In 1707, Sahu conferred on Parasoji the title of '*Sena Saheb Subha*' and issued a *sanad* granting him and his successors in perpetuity '*mokasa*' of the following places :—

1. *Prant* Ritapur and Sarkar-Gavel, *Prant* Berar, *Prant* Devgad, Canda and Gondavana.

<sup>1</sup> NPI., p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Malhar Ramrav Citnis Viracita Srimant Chatrapati Sambhaji Maharaja Ani Thorale Rajaram Maharaja yanci Caritre by K. N. Sane, Third Edition, 1915. p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> NPL, p. 45.



2. Mahalwise details of Anagondi<sup>1</sup>, Berar, etc.—

	<i>Sarkar.</i>	<i>Mahals.</i>
	Gavel	46
	Narnala	37
	Mahur	19
	Khedale (near Baitul)	21
	Pavnar	5
	Kalamb	19
Total	6	147

So far, for the grant of 147 *mahals* from the six *Sarkars*, there is no documentary evidence.<sup>2</sup> Parsoji, the first Sena *Saheb Subha* died at Khed at the confluence of the rivers Krsna and Venna in 1709, on his homeward journey from Satara.<sup>3</sup>

**KANHOJI BHOSLE.**

Parasoji was succeeded by his son Kanhoji. *Chatrapati* Sahu granted Kanhoji his hereditary title and also some land at Khed for the maintenance of his father's memorial. Darva was taken by Kanhoji and he made Bham his headquarters.

**Kanhoji breaks his relations with Sahu.**

In the struggle between the Sayyad brothers and *Nizam-ul-mulk* for the control of the Delhi affairs, the former received the support of Sahu. Sahu sent Bajirav *Pesva* and Kanhoji Bhosle against the *Nizam*. In the battle of Balapur fought on 10th August, 1720, the *Nizam* came out victorious. Many *Marathas* lost their lives. In the battle of Sakhar-Kheda, 1724, Kanhoji Bhosle offered to help Mubarij Khan against the *Nizam*, but Mubarij impudently refused it.

Kanhoji was a religious minded orthodox Maratha nobleman. It is said that he accepted food prepared by Brahmins alone. The religious bent of his mind was probably due to his having no son. He performed sacrifices, religious rites and observed fasts so that he should be blessed by God with a son. Kanhoji soon got a son whom he named Rupaji.<sup>4</sup>

Kanhoji it seems was hot tempered. He could not carry on well either with the *Chatrapati* or the *Pesva*. When called by the *Chatrapati* to explain the causes of his failure to pay the dues into the treasury, Kanhoji could neither pay the dues nor explain the accounts. The fact seems to be that he was not prepared to brook control with Sahu. As the relations worsened, Kanhoji on 23rd August 1725, decamped from Satara and hastened to the *Nizam* for

<sup>1</sup> The word Anagondi is wrongly read. Anagondi is in Karnatak. The correct reading of the word cannot be ascertained.

<sup>2</sup> NBB., p. 31, states that these *Mahals* were granted to Parasoji Bhosle. Independent evidence to support of this statement is not available.

P. D., Vol. 20, p. 1, "The Early struggle of the Bhosles cannot yet be set down with accuracy, not a single paper relating to Parasoji, the founder of the Nagpur Rajas and first prominent adherent of King Sahu, having been hitherto discovered.

<sup>3</sup> NPI, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

asylum. The *Nizam*, however, did not back Kanhoji as Sahu reminded him that such an act was against the treaty entered into between them. When all attempts at rapprochement failed, Sahu set Raghuji Bhosle against Kanhoji. Raghuji had been asking Kanhoji, his uncle, for his share in the ancestral *jagir*. This had naturally strained the relations between the nephew and the uncle. *Chatrapati* Sahu in setting the nephew against the uncle exploited the family feud to his own advantage.

After making the necessary preparations Raghuji marched in 1728 from Satara against his uncle. Sahu granted him the *mokasa* of Devur near Wai. For this grant the Bhosles of Nagpur were also styled as the *Rajas* of Devur. Raghuji received the robes of Sena *Saheb Subha*, *sanads* for Berar and Gondavana, and the right to extend the levy of *cauthai* to Chattisgad, Patna, Allahabad and Makasudabad (Bengal)

Raghuji entered Berar *via* Aurangabad. Near Jalna *Samser Bahaddar Atole* objected to Raghuji's taking the army through his territory as the old route passed through Nanded and Asti. Raghuji avoided an encounter with Atole and encamped at Balapur after crossing the Lakhavada ghats. From Balapur Raghuji sent his armed men all over the Berar and collected tributes. Sujayat Khan Pathan of Akola serving under the Navabs of Ellicpur was easily defeated by Raghuji and his territory subjugated. Thus, after establishing his rule over a greater part of Berar, Raghuji proceeded towards Bham, the headquarters of his uncle in A.D. 1730. The small fortress at Bham was besieged by Raghuji's army. He was joined by his other uncle Ranoji. Finding himself in a difficult situation, Kanhoji escaped from Bham and ran for safety towards Mahur. He was hotly chased by Raghuji and Ranoji and overtaken near Mandar (Van). In the skirmish that took place, Kanhoji was defeated and taken a prisoner. Kanhoji, the second Sena *Saheb Subha*, spent the remaining part of his life as a prisoner at Satara. At one time Kanhoji was an enterprising officer of Sahu. He made some conquests in Gondavana and led an incursion into Katak, laying the foundation of Maratha expansion eastward. His proposals that he should be allowed to maintain 200 horses, and Akola and Balapur in Paya Ghat should be restored to him, were not accepted. All was lost, once he lost the favour of Sahu.<sup>2</sup> The end of Kanhoji's political career in about 1730 A.D., opened up for Raghuji new opportunities in Berar, Nagpur and the region beyond, to the east.

#### **RAGHUJI BHOSLE.**

By suppressing the recalcitrant Kanhoji, Raghuji gained the favour of *Chatrapati* Sahu. As already observed, Sahu conferred on him the title of Sena *Saheb Subhna* and the right to collect *cauthai* from Berar,

<sup>1</sup> NPI., pp. 58-64.

<sup>2</sup> Grant Duff, A History of The Marathas, Vol. I, p. 424.

Gondavana, Chattisgad, Allahabad, Makasudabad (Bengal) and Patna. According to Grant Duff on the occasion of granting the rights Raghuji gave a bond which stated <sup>1</sup>:—

1. That he would maintain a body of 5,000 horse for the service of the State;
2. Pay an annual sum of Rs. 9 lacs ;
3. Pay half of the tribute, prizes, property and other contributions excluding the *ghasdana*;
4. Raise 10,000 horse when required, and accompany the *Pesva* or proceed to any place he might be ordered.

These terms of the bond are important in determining *Chatrapati*—Raghuji and *Pesva*—Raghuji relations.

Details of Raghuji's early life are not available. It seems that shortly after his birth his father Bimbaji died and he was brought up by his mother Kasibai and grandmother Bayabai at Pandavavadi near Wai (District Satara). The child, it is said, was born by the grace of one Ramajipant Kolhatkar, a pious devotee of Rama and was therefore named Raghuji. There seems to be much truth in this story. Raghuji was a devotee of God Rama though the family deity was Mahadev. He installed the new idol of Rama at Ramtek and was responsible for reviving the religious importance of this ancient place. In his letter-head he incorporated the word ' *Sita-kanta* ' meaning, the Lord of Sita in honour of his favourite God Rama.

When Raghuji attained manhood he served in the army of his uncle Ranoji. Later he was with his other uncle Kanhoji at Bham. Raghuji did not fare well with Kanhoji and entered the services of Cand Sultan of Devagad. For some time he was also with the *Navdb* of Ellicpur.<sup>2</sup> Finally Raghuji decided to serve *Chatrapati* Sahu at Satara. During his stay there he was asked to accompany Fatesingh Bhosle to the Karnatak where he distinguished himself as a capable soldier. When Raghuji's qualities as a soldier and leader of men came to the notice of Sahu, he appointed him against the disobedient Kanhoji.

In the early part of his career Raghuji appears to have been a freelance soldier, shifting his loyalty from his uncle to the weak Gond *rajas*. This was rather the time-honoured expedient resorted to by many an ambitious soldier. Raghuji was not slow to grasp the political situation prevailing in the area from the distant Karnatak to Gondavana and finally threw his lot with Sahu, who was by then a well-settled *Chatrapati*. This was indeed a wise decision which benefited Raghuji as also the Maratha expansion.

<sup>1</sup> Grant Duff, A History of The Marathas, Vol. I, page 424.

<sup>2</sup> N. P. I., p. 69.

After consolidating his position at Bham in Berar, Raghuji turned his attention to the Gond Kingdoms of Devagad, Gada-Mandla, Canda and Chattisgad. Internal dissensions in these kingdoms and their wars with other States were the occasions availed of by Raghuji for establishing his sway over them. In 1739-1740 Raghuji was sent to Karnatak by Sahu. Raghuji distinguished himself in this expedition. Returning from Karnatak he made the necessary arrangement for the invasion of Bengal and dispatched a large army under the command of his General Bhaskarpant. Bengal invasion engaged Raghuji's attention for ten years, from 1741 to 1751 A.D. The net gain was the province of Orissa. It was during these years that the historic dispute between Raghuji Bhosle and Balaji Pesva arose when their interest in the east clashed. Thus, broadly the chronological sequence of Raghuji's major exploits is—

- Securing Berar by defeating his uncle Kanhoji;
- Extending his sway over the Gond Kingdoms;
- Karnatak expedition; and
- Incursions into Bengal.

### **Raghuji and the Gond kingdoms.**

*Devagad* : Raghuji for sometime had sought service with Cand Sultan of Devagad after quitting his uncle Kanhoji at Bham with whom he had quarrelled. The details of Raghuji's service with Cand Sultan are not available from the known source material. Cand Sultan died in about 1738. His illegitimate son, Wali Sah killed Mir Bahaddar, the legitimate son of Cand Sultan. *Rani* Ratan Kuvar, the widow of Cand asked for Raghuji's help as her two other sons Akbar and Burhan were minors. Raghuji at once proceeded from Bham and defeated Wali Sah's generals at Patansavangi. He next conquered Pavani to the south of Bhandara on the river Wainganga. This was a strategic post. Raghuji appointed his own officer Tulojirampant. The fort of Bhanore or modern Bhandara was Raghuji's next target of attack. Wali Sah, from Devagad hurriedly dispatched an army under his *divan* Raghunathsing to relieve the pressure on Bhandara fort. Raghuji was camping at Sirasghat on the Wainganga. He split his army into two divisions stationing them at Sonbardi and Giroli. A select army under Raghuji Krande was sent to face the enemy with the instruction that it should take to its heels at a suitable time and lure Raghunathsing between the two Maratha divisions. Raghunathsing's army was entrapped, routed and drowned into the Wainganga. He himself was taken a prisoner in a wounded state and honourably sent back to Devagad with a view to capturing Wali Sah by treachery. The fort of Bhandara was besieged. Its *killedar* resisted bravely for about 22 days but was finally forced to deliver it to the enemy.

Raghuji next marched to Devagad. Wali Sah was advised by his *divan* Raghunathsing to go out of the fort. This was preplanned. In a skirmish outside the fort Wali was defeated and arrested.

*Rani* Ratan Kuvar considered Raghuji as her third son and gave him the third part of her kingdom. She paid him rupees ten lacs for war expenses. In 1737, the *Rani* granted Raghuji a *sanad* of her one-third kingdom bestowed upon him.

The *sanad* states that the fort of Pavani along with Balapur, *paragana* Multai with Cikhali and 156 villages under the said *paragana*, the whole of *paragana* Marud, were granted to Raghuji and his successors in perpetuity.<sup>1</sup> The *Rani* also agreed that she would not enter into a treaty with any other power without the knowledge of Raghuji. With the possession of these parts of Devagad, Raghuji shifted his headquarters from Bham to Nagpur. By 1748, the *divan* Raghunathsing attempted to break off his relations with Raghuji. The latter, therefore, brought Akbar and Burhan to Nagpur under his direct protection and care.<sup>2</sup> Eventually their kingdoms came to be managed by Raghuji and the Gond house of Devagad shaded into insignificance.

According to the account given in the *bakhar* (NBB), Raghuji secured a fresh *sanad* from Sahu in 1738 A.D., bestowing upon him the right to collect *cauthai* and *mokasa* of Lucknow, Makasudabad (Bengal), Bidar, Bitia, Bundelkhand, Allahabad, Hajipur, Patna and Devagad, Gadha, Bhavargad and Canda.<sup>3</sup> This very Information given by Wills runs as follows, “while returning from Satara, Sahu *Chatrapati* bestowed Gondvana *jhadi* up to Katak free of revenue upon the *Sena Saheb Subha*.”<sup>4</sup> Gondavana *jhadi* is the ancient Zadi Mandala to the east of the Wardha river which included Nagpur, Bhandara, Canda, etc.

*Gadha-Mandla* : It seems that when Bajirav was busy fighting with the *Nizam* at Bhopal in 1736, Raghuji proceeded as far as Allahabad and exacted tribute from the Raja of Gadha-Mandla. Bajirav strongly resented this act. His son Balaji invaded Gadha-Mandla<sup>5</sup> in 1742, on his way to Bengal. Raghuji who was engaged in his Bengal expedition at this time bitterly complained to Sahu of Balaji's encroachment upon Gadha-Mandla which was his sphere of activity. Along with Bengal, Allahabad, etc., Gadha-Mandla too was the bone of contention between Raghuji and Balaji. Both were finally reconciled to one another by *Chatrapati* Sahu in 1743<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> NPI., pp. 71-74 ; also see RMSH., p. 173- As desired by the *Rani* Ratan Kuvar her “possessions were divided into three equal parts and one of them, namely that containing Gondavana, Pavani, Marud, Multai and Barghat was given to Raghuji, *Sena Saheb* “.....“He then lived in Nagpur and Devagad provinces.”

<sup>2</sup> NPI., p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> RMSH., p. 173.

<sup>5</sup> NHM., Vol. II, p. 213. Raghuji complained to Sahu that Balaji captured his posts Gadha and Mandla, and ruined his *paraganas* Sivani and Chapar. The ruler of Mandla burnt himself to death to escape disgrace.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.



*Canda*: The fate of the Gond rulers of Canda was sealed when Devagad and Gadha-Mandla had come under Raghuji's sway. During the reign of Rama Sah, Raghuji invaded Canda. but finding him a saintly king, Raghuji was so impressed that he left the country unmolested. His successor Nilakanth Sah had gained disrepute as a tyrant. To deliver the people of Canda from his tyranny Raghuji invaded his country and made him a captive. The successors of Nilkanth Sah were granted pension by Raghuji. Among the Gondavana territories of Raghuji, Canda was next in importance to Nagpur<sup>1</sup>.

### **Raghuji's Karnatak expedition.**

After the death of Aurangzeb the whole of Karnatak was in a state of chaos. The various principalities were trying to extend their territory at the cost of their neighbours. Karnatak, then roughly included the territory to the south of Krsna bound by the Sahyadri and the Eastern *Ghats*. Aurangzeb had put Karnatak under the *subhas* of Bijapur and Hyderabad. The *sanad* of *cauthai* granted to Sahu by Emperor Muhammad Sah included Hyderabad and Bijapur, Karnatak in addition to the four other *subhas* of the Deccan. According to his *sanad* the tributary states of Tanjore, Tricinopoly and Mysore were also subject to the levy of *cauthai*.<sup>2</sup> The *Nizam-ul-mulk* as the *subhedar* of the Deccan claimed that all these territories belonged to him. The various *navabs* of Karnatak fought among themselves, the strongest of them trying to assert his authority over others by the simple law of might. The stronger *navabs* were those of Arcot, Sira Kadappa, Karnool and Savanur. The principality of Tanjore from the days of Sahaji comprised the *paraganas* of Bangalore, Hoskot, Kolar, Balapur and Sira. Its ruler Pratapsinha, *Chatrapati* Sahu's cousin, was constantly harassed by Canda Saheb, the son-in-law of Dost Ali, the *navab* of Arcot. Canda Saheb had usurped the kingdom of Tricinopoly by tempting its *Rani* Minaksi to form perpetual friendship with him. With the fall of Tricinopoly he cast his covetous eyes on Tanjore which belonged to *Raja* Pratapsinha. Pratapsinha appealed to Sahu for help who dispatched a large force under Fatesingh and Raghuji Bhosle. In April 1740, the Maratha forces attacked Arcot, killed the *navab* Dost Ali and took his *divan* Mir Asad, a prisoner in May 1740. With Arcot in their possession Raghuji and Fatesingh laid siege to Tricinopoly, the stronghold of Canda Saheb. Raghuji was joined by Pratapsinha. Canda Saheb unable to receive aid from his brother Bada Saheb of Madura, delivered the fort to Raghuji on 14 th March 1741, the auspicious day of *Ramanavami*. Canda Saheb and his son Abid Ali were imprisoned by Raghuji and at once sent to Nagpur under the strict supervision of his general Bhaskar Ram. Later, in 1744, Raghuji freed these royal prisoners on payment of a ransom of Rs. 7.75 lacs from the bankers of Satara. Nothing is known about the place where Canda Saheb and his son were confined. Raghuji's

<sup>1</sup> NPL, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> A History of the Marathas, Vol. I, (1912), by James Grant Duff-p. 368

leadership and tact in the Karnatak campaign at once enhanced his prestige at the court of Sahu. Pleased with his exploits Sahu conferred upon him the *mokasa* of Berar and Gondavana up to the frontiers of Katak.<sup>1</sup>

During the war Canda Saheb had sent his treasure and *zanana* for safe custody to Dumas, the French Governor of Pondicerry. Raghuji who had an eye on the wealth of the *navab* at once reprimanded Dumas for sheltering his enemy. Dumas politely yet firmly refused to surrender the entrusted wealth and women. Raghuji's wrath was wafted away when he was presented a few fine Champagne bottles by Dumas. Raghuji's wife is said to have been highly delighted with this French gift and asked for more. When Sahu came to know of this he is reported to have remarked that a kingdom was sold for a bottle of wine. Whatever the account of this story, its realistic side must not be lost sight of by historians. Dumas at Pondicerry was well-equipped with men and material. In the extreme hour of difficulty he would have easily escaped into the sea with his wealth and women, and Raghuji's attack would have been rendered ineffective if he had chosen to launch one. Raghuji was not slow to understand the power of the French. Weighing things in mind Raghuji might have preferred an honourable retreat to a futile attack.

Karnatak campaign gave Raghuji eminence at the court of Satara and eventually in the Maratha confederacy. It helped him in giving a status on par with the *Pesvas*.

Raghuji hurriedly returned to Nagpur as the Bengal affair was awaiting his presence.

### **Raghuji raids on Bengal.**

It was Kanhoji Bhosle who first led an incursion in the territory of Orissa or Katak taking advantage of the chaotic conditions prevailing there. Before he was defeated and sent to Satara as a prisoner by Raghuji Bhosle, *Chatrapati* Sahu granted Raghuji a *sanad* of Berar and Gondavana and of the right to collect *cauthai* of Chattisgad, Patna, Allahabad and Makasudabad (Mursidabad).<sup>2</sup> The date of his *sanad*, 1723 A.D., is obviously incorrect. On this occasion the grant of *mokasa* of Devur near Wai to Raghuji is dated 1731, A.D.<sup>3</sup> The *sanad*, of Chattisgad, etc., up to Mursidabad, therefore, should also be roughly of the same date, i.e., 1730 or 1731 or a year earlier. It is not likely to have been given as early as 1723 A.D. For this *sanad* of collecting *cauthai* from Chattisgad to Mursidabad, Sahu never obtained regular permission from the Moghals. In order to secure the cession of Malva

<sup>1</sup> NHM, Vol. II, pp. 253-257.

<sup>2</sup> NPL., p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

under imperial seal Bajirav I endeavoured hard all his life. He forced the *Nizam* after defeating him at Bhopal in 1738, to obtain a *sanad* for Malva.<sup>1</sup> Actually Malva was given to the charge of his son Balaji as its deputy *subhedar* by an imperial *farrnan* as late as 1741 A.D.<sup>2</sup> But Sahu when he allowed Raghuji Bhosle to extend his sway as far as Bengal and collect *cauthai*, had not actually obtained a royal *farman* from Delhi to that effect.

The political condition of Bengal was precarious by about 1740. Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were, then, all under the *navab* who resided at Mursidabad. Its able governor Mursid Qulikhan died in 1727. In 1740, his son-in-law Sarfaraz Khan who was the *navab*, was killed by an ambitious Turk in his service named Alivardi Khan.<sup>3</sup> Alivardi's usurpation was hated by the partisans of the dead *navab*., The strong faction at Alivardi's court was headed by an able Persian of Siraz, by name Mir Habib who had risen to the position of deputy *navabship* of Orissa from very humble beginnings. He had made offers to Raghuji in the Bengal territory if he undertook an invasion. This was a very tempting offer to Raghuji who had been waiting to extend his sphere of influence to the east of Nagpur. Rather he considered the region from Nagpur to Bengal as his special field of activity. His brilliant successes in Karnatak had strengthened his claim which had the full support of Chatrapati Sahu who had granted him a *sanad* to that effect.

When Raghuji was in Karnatak Mir Habib had been to Nagpur urging Bhaskar Ram to invade Bengal. But Bhaskar Ram waited till his master returned home from the distant Karnatak. On his return from Karnatak, Raghuji made thorough preparations and sent a force of ten thousand under the able command of Bhaskar Ram. On the auspicious day of *Dasara* of 1741, Bhaskar Ram set out for the expedition. He marched through Ramgad plundering Pacet (60 miles or 96.540 km., east of Ranci) on the way to Burdvan. Alivardi Khan camping at Burdvan (15th April 1742) with his slender army, was surprised by the Maratha forces. Bhaskar Ram employed half of his army in looting the area adjacent to Burdvan. The Khan finding himself helpless sent his agents to Bhaskar Ram begging for peace. The negotiations however fell through as Bhaskar Ram demanded rupees ten lacs as peace price, The Khan secretly left Burdvan for Katva, hotly chased by the Marathas. As it was then the month of May, Bhaskar Ram decided; to return to Nagpur to avoid the fury of monsoon. He, however, changed his plan at the prospect of obtaining immense booty from Mursidabad as designed by Mir Habib. Mir Habib with a light Maratha force fell on Mursidabad and returned to Katva loaded with booty worth two to three crores. Alivardi Khan reached his capital just a day late—7th May—when it had been denuded of its wealth by the Marathas. During the rainy season the Marathas and

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<sup>1</sup> NHM, vol. II, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> NHM., Vol. II, p. 209.

Mir Habib established their sway as far as Calcutta. They took back Orissa. The East India Company dug a ditch round their factory known as the Maratha Ditch.

The Maratha camp at Katva was busy celebrating the *Durga puja* festival on 18th September 1742. It was attacked on 27th September by Alivardi's forces compelling them to run for safety helter-skelter. Bhaskar Ram escaped towards Pacet. He had to give up the outposts of Burdwan, Hugli and Hijli. Katak was retaken by Alivardi and he returned to Mursidabad on 9th February 1743. Bhaskar Ram informed Raghuji of this discomfiture requesting him to despatch aid immediately. Raghuji however could not send succour to Bhaskar Ram owing to his clash with Balaji Bajirav *Pesva*.

The *Pesva* had left Poona as early as 1741 with a view to putting a stop to Raghuji's activities in Bengal. He consolidated his position in Malwa with the help of Malharav Holkar, and captured Gadha, Mandla, plundering Sivani and Chapar. Alivardi was terribly afraid on learning these activities of the *Pesva*, as he was expecting a joint attack by the *Pesva* and Raghuji. The *Pesva*, however, offered to help the emperor and Alivardi Khan against Raghuji if he were granted the *cauthat* right of Malwa, Bundelkhand and Allahabad. The Emperor readily agreed to this proposal and sent the *Pesva* to relieve Alivardi.

On 1st February 1743, the *Pesva* and his vast army took a bath in the holy waters of the Ganga and the Yamuna at Prayag. Thence he proceeded to Mursidabad where he had a meeting with Alivardi near Plassey on 30th March 1743. Alivardi agreed to pay the *cauthai* of Bengal to Sahu and rupees twenty-two lacs to Balaji towards the expenditure of the army.<sup>1</sup> A meeting between Raghuji and Balaji earlier could not bring any tangible result.<sup>2</sup>

The *Pesva's* army actually clashed with that of Raghuji in the Bendu pass near Pacet. The rear part of Raghuji's army was attacked and plundered by the *Pesva*. From Pacet Raghuji made good for Nagpur and the *Pesva* too started back for Poona via Gaya.<sup>3</sup>

*Chatrapati* Sahu who had known the deep-rooted rivalry between Balaji and Raghuji called them to Satara and brought about a reconciliation which was respected by both the parties. Had the breach been neglected it would have certainly been detrimental to the interest of the Maratha power in India. Raghuji and Balaji signed an agreement at Satara in the presence of the *Chatrapati* on 31st August 1743. By this, all the territory from Berar to the east reaching Katak, Bengal and Lucknow was assigned to Raghuji, and that

<sup>1</sup> OUM., p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> NHM., Vol. II, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

to the west of this line including Ajmer, Agra, Prayag and Malva to Balaji *Pesva*. None was to interfere with other's sphere.<sup>1</sup>

Freed from the troubles with the *Pesva*, the *Sena Siheb Subha* returned to Nagpur from Satara and sent an expedition into Bengal under Bhaskar Ram with a view to making up the lost ground. Bhaskar Ram left Nagpur early in 1744. Together with Mir Habib he harassed Alivardi Khan pressing him to pay *cauthai*. Driven to desperateness Alivardi Khan hatched a plot to kill Bhaskar Ram by deceit. Through his agents he invited Bhaskar Ram for a meeting. It was arranged at Mankura between Amniganj and Katva when both the parties had pledged not to do any mischief by touching the Kuran and Ganga water. Mir Habib had warned Bhaskar of the Khan's evil intention. But the brave and over-confident Bhaskar went to a parley with the Khan accompanied by a few select men. When Bhaskar Ram took a seat in front of the *Navab* the latter gave a signal as pre-planned and the hiding Muslim soldiers cut Bhaskar and his comrades to pieces. Twenty-two Maratha chiefs were killed. This tragic event took place on 31st March 1744.<sup>2</sup>

Bhaskar Ram's murder was an irreparable loss to Raghuji and he never forgot the treacherous act of the Khan. With a view to punishing the Khan, Raghuji started with fourteen thousand horses, crossed the mountainous tract and putting Sambalpur to his left reached Orissa in March 1745. Durlabhram, the new deputy governor of Orrissa who was taken by surprise entered the fort of Barabati for safety. The fort was besieged by Raghuji, Durlabhram soon surrendered to Raghuji and found himself a prisoner in his camp, but the siege continued as another officer, Abdul Aziz, offered stiff resistance. Alivardi was unable to send supplies to Abdul Aziz at the approach of the rainy season. Abdul therefore surrendered the fort to Raghuji on 12th May 1745, after bravely defending it for two months. When the siege was on, the Marathas occupied Orissa as far as Midnapur and Hugli, and plundered Burdvan.<sup>3</sup>

After capturing the fort of Barabati the Marathas moved to Burdvan. At the invitation of a number of disgruntled Afghans, Raghuji marched towards Bihar. An indecisive battle was fought at Mehib Alipur and Alivardi ran towards Mursidabad on 21st December 1745. At Ramdighi near Katva, Raghuji received a terrible set-back and left for Nagpur in January of 1746. He stationed three thousand Marathas under Mir Habib on the understanding that he would pay rupees eleven lacs for the use of his army.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NHM., Vol. II, p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> OUM., p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> OUM., pp. 15, 16.



In order to checkmate the Marathas, Alivardi, sent his men from Mursidabad in November 1746.” They inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Marathas at Midnapur. The Marathas fled towards Balasore through Jalesvar.<sup>1</sup>

By this time Janoji Bhosle appeared on the scene. He reached Katak for the rescue of Mir Habib. A stiff battle ensued between Janoji and Alivardi, but as the rains were on, the latter returned to Mursidabad leaving the Marathas, masters of Orissa, up to Midnapur throughout the year 1747. The plundering operations of the Marathas continued unabated. Janoji returned to Nagpur on hearing the news of his mother’s death. Mir Habib was at Midnapur with a Maratha force to help him. Raghuji sent his son Sabaji for the assistance of Habib.

In 1748 Alivardi reached Balasore and despatched his army to drive away the Marathas who were making preparations to plunder the English factory under the command of Nilo Pandit. He in vain tried to search for the force under Habib, who was hiding in the jungles of Katak. He then made a surprise attack on the fort of Barabati and was finally able to take it in his possession. In June, 1749, Alivardi returned to Bengal.

Mir Habib with the Maratha force reappeared at Katak. Alivardi had to postpone his attack on the Marathas as the rains had set in. On his reaching Mursidabad he was taken ill in October, 1749<sup>2</sup>.

From October, 1749 to March, 1751, the Marathas did not allow Alivardi to rest. They harassed him by avoiding an open war when he came out with a large army from Mursidabad. In 1750 when Alivardi was at Midnapur the Marathas quickly marched towards Mursidabad plundering all the way. Durlabhram and Mir Jafar, the officers who were stationed at Midnapur were nervous and unable to check the Maratha inroads. This lingering war was a great drain on Alivardi’s resources and men. The territory under him was a house divided against itself. In 1750 Alivardi was a man of 75, physically ailing. As the situation was intolerable his shrewd wife advised him to negotiate with the Marathas.<sup>3</sup> Old Alivardi accepted his wife’s counsel and deputed Mir Jafar to meet Janoji and Mir Habib to settle the terms of peace. For more than a couple of years Janoji was in Orissa<sup>4</sup> or Raghuji was busy with the political affairs at Satara and Nagpur. The treaty was signed in May, 1751 :—

(1) Mir Habib was to be confirmed in the Government of Orissa as the deputy *Subhedar* of Mursidabad.

(2) The *Navab* was to pay annually 12 lacs of rupees to the Bhosles of Nagpur for the *cauthai* of Bengal and Bihar.

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<sup>1</sup> NHM., Vol. II, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> OUM., pp. 16, 17.

<sup>3</sup> NHM., Vol. III, p. 402.

<sup>4</sup> NPI, p. 98.

(3) When these amounts were regularly paid, the Bhosles were not to harass the two provinces.

(4) The district of Katak i.e., the territory up to the river Suvarnarekha was to be considered as the possession of the Bhosles.<sup>1</sup>

### **Raghuji's Achievements.**

After a long struggle lasting for nearly ten years, Raghuji was able to establish his right of collecting *cauthai* from Bengal and Bihar. The province of Katak as far as Suvarnarekha came under his possession. This was the greatest achievement of Raghuji Bhosle crowning his earlier successes.

The Smaller states of Raipur, Ratanpur, Bilaspur and Sambalpur of Chattisgad area were conquered by Bhaskar Ram during the first two raids of Bengal. Raghuji's illegitimate son Mohansingh was in charge of these States<sup>2</sup>.

Raghuji's territory included the area from Berar to Katak. The Gond Kingdoms of Gadha-Mandla, Canda or Candrapur and Devagad were in his possession. Bihar proper was under the dual authority of the Bhosles and the Nizam. Originally the Bhosles were to get from revenue of Berar 25 per cent as *cauthai*, 10 per cent as *sardesmukhi* and 5 per cent as *ghasdana*, the total working at 40 per cent. The remaining 60 per cent of the total revenue of Berar was to go to the *Nizam*. But later this original treaty seems to have been reversed by which the Bhosles secured 60 per cent of the revenue and the *Nizam*, the remaining 40 per cent.<sup>3</sup>

The strategic forts of Gavilgad and Narnala with the territory attached to them were exclusively under Raghuji's possession. Similarly, the fort of Manikdurg in the Mahur area belonged to him. As already observed the states of Chattisgad were also under his way as important outposts between Nagpur and the province of Katak. The acquisition of this vast territory speaks for Raghuji's generalship. He might have lost a few battles but he always won the war. In diplomacy, as understood in his day, he was second to none. By his mounting successes he won the confidence of *Chatrapati* Sahu and on critical occasions he was consulted by him. Sahu, prior to his death had called Raghuji to Satara to discuss the matter of succession to the *Chatrapati's gadi*., Raghuji was related to Sahu through his wife.

Like Bajirav I, Raghuji too was loved by his followers. He had capable and trustworthy persons like Bhaskarpant, Raghuji Karande, Tulojipant, Naroji Jacaka, Rakhamaji Ganes, Krsnaji Atole and others<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> NHM. vol. II, 224, Dr. B. C. Ray, in his Orissa under Marathas, p. 20, expresses doubt regarding the exactness of the terms of the treaty. But from the treaty of Devaganv, 1803, it is certain that Katak and Balasore were surrendered to the British by the Bhosles. This means that Katak and Balasore were with the Bhosles up to 1803, since their conquest.

<sup>2</sup> NPI, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> NFL., pp. 48 and 102.

<sup>4</sup> NPL., pp. 105, 106.

Raghuji and the *Pesvas* were not always on good terms. The rivalry between the two goes back to the days of *Pesva* Bajirav I. The spheres of influence of Raghuji and Bajirav came into conflict when Bajirav secured one-third part of Bundelkhand for the timely help rendered to - Chatrasal against Bangas. When Bajirav was fighting with the *Nizam* at Bhopal in 1738, Raghuji did not offer him any help in spite of repeated requests. In the agreement between Raghuji and Sahu, it was clearly stated that the former would accompany the *Pesva* in his campaigns. But actually neither Bajirav nor his son Balaji were able to command the services of Raghuji in their capacity as the *Pesva* or Prime Minister. Chatrapati Sahu too often found it difficult to exercise control when two or more of his high servants were at sixes and sevens. Lack of strong central authority was rather the serious defect from which the Maratha power suffered in the post-Sivaji period.

Raghuji avoided an open clash with Bajirav knowing well his ability as also the influence he wielded with the *Chatrapati*. Bajirav too acting on the advice of his brother Cimajiappa settled his difference with Raghuji amicably.<sup>1</sup>

The difference between Raghuji and Balaji *Pesva* over the eastern sphere are historic. They were settled by the mild-tempered Sahu, who divided the spheres of activity of the two by granting Raghuji the territory from Nagpur to Katak and to the ' *Pesva* to the west of this line. Raghuji supported Babuji Naik who was aspiring for *Pesvaship* as against Balaji Bajirav. But so long as Sahu was alive such differences were not allowed to take a serious turn. After Sahu's death Raghuji respected the *Pesva's* authority. He did not join the *Pesva's* opponents in the Maratha confederacy being convinced that he was the ablest man among the Maratha's to occupy the *Pesvaship*. Raghuji knew well when to oppose and when to yield. He was not prepared to allow matters to be carried to the breaking point unnecessarily. In one of his letters to Nana *Pesva* he writes—'the Late *Srimant* Bajirav was kind to me. But differences arose when we had a clash with Avaji Kavade who had entered Berar. All these matters should now be forgotten and I should be treated as your man.'<sup>2</sup> Balaji *Pesva* on learning the death of Raghuji wrote-Raghuji was a respectable nobleman. His death is indeed a matter of great regret. God's will has to be accepted. Of late Raghuji was of much help to us<sup>3</sup>.

Raghuji was a self-made man. He had risen to the status of a first-rate nobleman at the court of Sahu by the dint of his merit. He therefore regarded that his status was on par with that of the *Pesva* for all practical purposes. He disliked that the *Pesva* should interfere with his sphere of influence. It may be observed

<sup>1</sup> NPI., p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> PD., 20, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> PD., 20, p. 68.

that for this mutual jealousy neither the *Pesva* nor Raghuji was so much at fault. The defect lay in the weakness of the central authority. In the absence of a strong centre the Marathas, were not able to create an effective confederacy which could enforce its authority over all.

### **JANOJI BHOSLE. 1755-1772**

Raghuji was mainly responsible for the prosperity of Nagpur. He brought along with him a number of Maratha and Brahmin families from western Maharashtra who infused new order and life in the administration of Nagpur and Berar. Cultivation of Nagpur improved under Raghuji. A number of *Kunbi* or cultivators' families settled in the territory under Raghuji. The credit of settling the weavers or *Kostis* also goes to Raghuji Bhosle

Raghuji was a devotee of Rama. He installed the idol of Rama at Ramtek and revived the importance of this place of epic fame. He made land grants to many other temples and holy places.

The *Jari-Pataka* and the saffron coloured flag were the emblems of Raghuji. This great general who extended the Maratha power as far as Katak breathed his last at Nagpur on the 14th of February 1755.<sup>1</sup>

Raghuji had four sons, Mudhoji and Bimbaji from the elder wife, and Janoji and Sabaji from the younger. Janoji was the eldest among his brothers. It was Raghuji's desire that Janoji should succeed him and others should get their due shares of his vast territory. However, Mudhoji put his claim for his father's *gadi* on the plea that he was the son of the eldest wife of Raghuji. By the practice of primogeniture then prevailing, this claim was inadmissible. Janoji had the support of a number of courtiers like Krsnaji Govindrav, the *subhedar* of Berar; Narahar Ballal, the *subhedar* of Nagpur, Sivabhat Sathe, the *Subhedar* of Katak; Raghuji Karande, Bimbaji Vanjal, Naroji Jacaka Sivaji Kesav Talkute, Anandrav Vagh and Krsnaji Atole. Mudhoji had the support of Sadasiv Hari, his *divan*, Dinkar Vinayak, Sivaji Vinayak and Narasingrav Bhavani. The dispute of the two brothers was referred to the *Pesva* Balaji Bajirav. Both of them were called to Poona. The title of *Senasaheb Subha* was conferred on Janoji while the new title of *Senadhurandhar* was created for Mudhoji. Mudhoji received Candrapur or Canda and Chattisgad with the former as his seat of administration. Bimbaji was to reside at Chattisgad and Sabaji at Darva in Berar<sup>2</sup> The Bhosle brothers agreed to pay to the *Pesva* a sum of twenty lacs<sup>3</sup> as present on this occasion according to the time-honoured custom. Actually the *sanad of Senasaheb Subha* was issued as late as 1761 by Tarabai when Madhavara I assumed *Pesvaship*,

<sup>1</sup> NPL, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> NPL, pp. 115-118.

<sup>3</sup> NHM., Vol. II, p. 342.

At this time, Devajipant Corghade was a promising young man who settled the amount of present between Janoji and the *Pesva* Balaji Bajirav.

Janoji and Mudhoji fought among themselves when their negotiations were in progress at Poona, and even after their dispute was settled by the *Pesva*.

By about 1759, the two brothers tried to settle their differences by resorting to arms. A battle was fought near Rahatganv in which Mudhoji was forced to retreat. In the treaty that followed, it was decided that Mudhoji should actively participate in the administration and Raghuji Karande, Trimbakji Raje (Vavikar) Bhosle and Piraji Nimbalkar should act as mediators with a view to avoid any rupture in future. Piraji Nimbalkar along with his force of six thousand was brought into the service of Janoji by Divakarpant. Piraji hailed from western Maharashtra.<sup>1</sup>

In 1760, Janoji and Mudhoji appealed to Sadasivrav to settle their dispute. Sadasivrav offered to settle it but asked them to run to his help at Udgir in his war against the *Nizam*. Both the brothers hastened to help Sadasivrav but the latter had concluded a treaty with the *Nizam* before the armies of the Bhosles could be brought into the field.<sup>2</sup>

Later, Mudhoji was forced to leave the fort of Canda when two of his trusted officers Abaji Bhosla and Gangadharpant turned against him. Janoji taking advantage of this difficulty marched on Canda, but hurriedly left the place being involved in the *Pesva-Nizam* war, leaving behind Tulojipant and Majidkhan for the reduction of Canda, fort.<sup>3</sup>

### **Janoji and *Pesva* Balaji Bajirav.**

The differences between the two brothers often resulting in an armed clash naturally weakened the power of the Bhosles. Nagpur, after the death of Raghuji, became a hot bed of political intrigues. Many courtiers exploited the family faction to their selfish ends. The two brothers were finally reconciled to each other because Janoji who was without a son decided to adopt Mudhoji's son as his successor. The credit of this amity, however, goes to the situation rather than to the wisdom of the either brother.

Janoji Bhosle was a man of vacillating nature. In the conflict between the *Pesva* and the *Nizam* he sided with the latter. But both the *Pesvas* Balaji and Madhavrav I proved too strong for him. Raghuji Bhosle when once reconciled with, the *Pesva* by the efforts of Sahu remained loyal to him. Janoji failed to grasp the situation and had to pay heavily for the same in his relations with the *Pesvas*. At least as a matter of policy for safe-guarding his own territory, he should have maintained friendly relations with the *Pesva*.

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<sup>1</sup> NPL., pp. 126, 127.

<sup>2</sup> NPL, pp. 128, 129.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.



It was Balaji Bajirav who brought about a compromise between Janoji and Mudhoji. Janoji never cared to pay the *Pesva* the sum of the present he had agreed to, when he was invested with the title of *Senasaheb Subha*. Similarly, he was very negligent in the payment of the dues to the central treasury. The *Pesvas* efforts to recover the State dues through his agents Vyahkat Moresvar and Trimbakaji Bhosle proved futile.<sup>1</sup> In 1757-58, Mudhoji accompanied Raghunathrav in his north Indian expedition. But soon returned back to Berar owing to some differences with him.<sup>2</sup>

In the Battle of Udgir, Janoji and Mudhoji went to help Bhau when the war was practically over. For a short time, when the Bhosle brothers worked in co-operation they helped the *Pesva* in his attack on the *Nizam* at Sindkhed.<sup>3</sup> The Bhosle brothers, mainly Janoji and Mudhoji did not accompany Bhausahab to the battle-field of Panipat. Nor does Bhau seem to have commanded their service when the Marathas were to engage themselves in a life and death struggle with Ahmad Sah Abdali. The cordial relations which existed between the *Pesvas* and the Sindes were conspicuous by their absence between the *Pesvas* and the Bhosles of Nagpur.

Janoji and Mudhoji were with Nanasahab *Pesva* when he was hastening to help Bhau before the final rout of the Marathas on the battle-field of Panipat. Janoji saved the retreating Marathas from the attacks of the anti-Maratha elements on their homeward journey. He brought the recalcitrant Bundela Chiefs under control.<sup>4</sup>

Following their defeat in the Third Battle of Panipat, the Marathas were busy putting their own affairs in order. The robes of *Pesvaship* were granted to Madhavrav I. His uncle who was aspiring for the same office was not happy with this arrangement. The *Nizam* who was smarting under the defeat he had suffered in the Battle of Udgir was eager to fish in the troubled waters at Poona. With a vast army of sixty thousand strong he desecrated the holy places of Toka and Pravara Sangam and dug up Sind's palaces at Srigonda for hidden treasure. In December 1761, he camped at Urlikanjan for an attack on Poona. Raghunathrav sent urgent calls to the Marath generals for help. Janoji Bhosle had joined the *Pesva* with his army.<sup>5</sup> He was present in the Battle of Cambhargonda with a force of seven to eight thousand.<sup>6</sup> The *Nizam* was surrounded by the Maratha forces and compelled to surrender. Majority of the Maratha nobles felt that this was the long awaited opportunity to exterminate the *Nizam*. But this could not be brought about because of the easy terms he was given by Raghunathrav.

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<sup>1</sup> NPI., p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> NPI., p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> NHM., Vol. II, p. 342.

<sup>4</sup> NPI., p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> NHM., Vol. II, p. 467,

<sup>6</sup> NPI., p. 136.

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Raghunathrav had given easy terms to the *Nizam* at Urli with a view to securing his support in his dispute with Madhavrav which was expected any moment. Raghunathrav was unwilling to work in co-operation with his young nephew who was the *Pesva*. The situation deteriorated fast heading towards a civil war. Raghunathrav's partisans had secretly secured the help of the *Nizam* and Janoji Bhosle. In this great plot headed by Raghunathrav, it was decided to deprive Madhavrav of his *Pesvaship* and power. Raghunath was to appoint men of his own choice in high offices. Janoji Bhosle was lured into the plot by the offer of *Chatrapatiship* at Satara after deposing Ramraja. Janoji and the *Nizam* met near Kalaburgi (Gulburga) and agreed to join the plot. From the territory that would be acquired the *Nizam* was to secure sixty per cent of the total tribute and Janoji forty per cent. The *Pesva's* agents Vyankat Moresvar and Ramaji Ballal tried in vain to dissuade Janoji and his adviser Divakarpant from joining the plot.

Young Madhavrav realising the gravity of the situation boldly surrendered himself to his uncle and put an end to the civil war that was threatening to sap the Maratha power. By this dramatic decision Janoji's dream of securing *Chatrapatiship* evaporated.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after the surrender of Madhavrav to his uncle, the latter—Raghunathrav—started making his own arrangement by distributing offices and titles to his favourites and partisans. For some days in November 1762, the Maratha leaders and diplomats assembled at Aleganv and discussed all domestic issues.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately such meetings could not be had frequently to solve the problems of the Marathi confederacy. Moreover, there was no strong central authority which could force the decisions on all the members taken at such meetings.

The treaty between the Marathas and the *Nizam* proved to be shortlived. Raghunathrav, who was proceeding against Haidar Ali received news that the *Nizam* and Janoji Bhosle along with a number of discontented courtiers were busy forming a coalition against him. Janoji and the *Nizam* met at Gulburga on 9th February 1763 and discussed the plan of seizing the *Pesvas* lands and sharing the spoils. Among the other Marathas who joined the *Nizam* were the Patvardhans and the Pratinidhis. The *Nizam* as the head of this unholy alliance sent his demands to the *Pesva* stating that all the forts east of the river Bhima should be delivered unto him, those who had been deprived of their *Jagirs* should receive them back and the *Pesva* should settle all State affairs in consultation with the *Nizam's divan*.<sup>3</sup>

This challenge nullified the easy terms which Raghunathrav had given to the *Nizam* at Urlikancon. Giving up the march on the territory of Haidar Ali, Raghunathrav moved towards Aurangabad.

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<sup>1</sup> NHM., Vol. II, p. 472.

<sup>2</sup> NHM., Vol. II, 472-73.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 475.

Malharav Holkar joined Raghunathrav when he was promised an additional *Jagir* of ten lacs. The plan of Raghunathrav and Holkar was to lay waste the territory of the *Nizam* and his partisans. Knowing well that Raghunathrav was a past master in the guerilla warfare, the *Nizam* decided to attack Poona on the advice of Janoji Bhosle. The combined armies of the *Nizam* and the Bhosles fell upon Poona in 1763. Gopikabai sought shelter with her men and jewellery in the fort of Purandar. Heavy tribute was exacted from the people of Poona and the city burnt down. The shrine of Parvati and other temples were desecrated and idols destroyed. Raghuji Karande, the general of the Bhosle laid waste the region around Sinhgad and Purandar. He looted the *Pesva's* jewellery at Sasvad and set on fire important State records taken there for safety.<sup>1</sup> To retaliate the sack of Poona, Raghunathrav and his men carried fire and sword in the *Nizam's* territory. His army sacked parts of Berar. Mahadaji Sinda was ordered to raid Janoji's territory and he proceeded towards Berar from Ujjain. Raghunathrav had written Janoji reprimanding him of his disloyalty and bringing to his notice how unbecoming it was for him to join the *Nizam*. At the same time Malharav Holkar was trying to dissuade Janoji to give up the cause of the *Nizam* through his advisers Divakarpant and Bhavani Munsli Janoji was offered territory worth 31 lacs and was to be confirmed in the *Sendsdheb-Subhaship*. These direct threats and diplomatic approaches finally won Janoji to the *Pesva's* side. He agreed to leave the *Nizam* at the nick of the moment when the Marathas would lead an attack. The other Maratha nobles like Bhavanrav Pratinidhi, Gopalrav Patvar-dhan, Piraji Nimbalkar and Gamaji were also persuaded to desert the *Nizam* on the promise of receiving *jagirs* and restoring lost positions.<sup>2</sup> In the Battle of Raksasabhuvan (10th August 1763), the *Nizam* was routed and forced to surrender. He gave to the *Pesva* territory worth 82 lacs. Janoji gave a banquet to the *pesva* and presented him the guns he had captured in the sack of Poona along with the *Nizam*. Janoji and the *Pesva* were reconciled temporarily.

Vitthal Sundar the *divan* of the *Nizam* who was the brain behind all the ambitious schemes of his master was killed in the Battle of Raksasabhuvan.

The young *Pesva* Madhavrav distinguished himself in the battle. The success of this battle was mainly due to his strategic and tactical movements.

### **Janoji and Madhavrav Pesva.**

Maratha-Nizam struggle which ended in the battle of Raksasabhuvan, Janoji because of his changing policy had displeased both the *Nizam* and the *Pesva*. He had given up the wise policy

<sup>1</sup> NPI., p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

of his father of supporting the *Pesva* as the strong man. His policy was devoid of any sound principle. It was guided by the idea of extending one's own territory at the cost of others, including that of the other Maratha potentates. This was rather the common malady from which the entire Maratha power was suffering. Madhavrav was determined to correct this defect. With great difficulty he had brought Janoji into his camp in the life and death struggle with the *Nizam*. The sack of Poona in which Janoji carried fire and sword was an act which the *Pesva* was not prepared to forget. In the family dispute between Madhavrav and Raghunathrav Janoji always espoused the cause of the latter. Raghunathrav in his own way gave easy terms to Janoji looking upon him as his supporter in his dispute with Madhavrav.

Madhavrav was waiting for an opportunity to punish Janoji. Berar was subject to the dual administration of the Bhosles and the *Nizam*. This naturally created friction between the two on several occasions. In 1765, Moro Dhondaji an officer of the *Nizam* in Berar was attacked by Janoji's men. The *Nizam's* fiasco in the Battle of Raksasabhuvan was the result of Janoji's treachery. He was keen on seeking revenge upon Janoji for his breach of trust. He therefore appealed to the *Pesva* for help when his officer was attacked. The *Pesva* at once decided to help the *Nizam*.<sup>1</sup> On 17th October 1765, Madhavrav proceeded from Poona and was joined by the *Nizam's* *divan* Rukn-ud-Daula with a force of seven to eight thousand. The combined forces camped at Edalabad in December 1765. Raghunathrav also came with his force to join his nephew. The *Nizam* started from Hyderabad and camped at Karanja. His army was well-equipped with artillery. From Edlabad the *Pesva's* forces went to Balapur and started looting the territory of the Bhosle after dividing themselves into suitable batches. Sums of Rs. 1,75,000 and Rs. 1,70,000, were exacted from Balapur and Akola, respectively as tributes. Janoji and Mudhoji took shelter in the fort of Amner along with their families. Later, they shifted to the stonger fort of Canda. Janoji finding the combined forces too strong for him to overcome sued for peace through the *Pesva's* envoy Vyankat Moresvar. The *Pesva* too had no stomach for the fight. He was satisfied with the punishment he had meted out to the disobedient Janoji. The terms of the treaty were finalised at Kholapur near Daryapur in 1766. It was decided that the Bhosle should retain territory worth Rs. 8 lacs only, out of the total territory of Rs. 32 lacs, he had received from the *Pesva*, in the Battle of Raksasabhuvan. Out of the remaining 24 lacs, the *Pesva* was to give the *Nizam* territory worth 15 lacs and was to retain for himself the rest.<sup>2</sup> Many differences between the *Nizam* and Janoji were settled on this occasion. Following rapprochement Janoji sent his men to help Raghunathrav in his north Indian campaign.

<sup>1</sup> NPI., p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> NPI, p. 185.

When the negotiations between Madhavrav and Janoji were in progress, the former's agent conveyed him Janoji's contention, Its gist is indicative of the general state of affairs in the Maratha Confederacy. Janoji was not slow to understand that the dispute between him and the *Pesva* would only benefit the *Nizam*. But desire for power rendered any satisfactory solution difficult. The letter written to the *Pesva* by his agent conveying Janoji's mind runs as follows: "The *Srimant* being angry with us (Janoji) has invaded Berar. I am. not guilty of burning Poona. When the *Nizam* indulged in this act I did not support him. I, however, admit that I did not help in the campaign against Haidar Nayak. It is after all human to err But the punishment meted out to me by depriving me of territory worth Rs. 30 lacs is too heavy. That has now been offered to the *Nizam*. Should the serpent be fed with milk ? If I am ordered to, attack the *Nizam*. I would destroy him in no time..... I shall proceed by rapid marches to meet your honour. I should not be let down".<sup>1</sup> Janoji gave expression to his feelings in these words. But it seems that he did not really repent for what had happened. For, within a couple of years after the treaty of Daryapur he once again sided with Raghunathrav in his dispute with Madhavrav and drew the latter's wrath upon himself.

#### **Madhavrav attacks Janoji and humbles him.**

In the quarrel between Madhavrav and Raghunathrav in 1768, Janoji decided to support the latter. However, Raghunathrav was defeated and arrested before Janoji's army could join him. Madhavrav was determined to teach Janoji a lesson for violating the treaty of Daryapur in which he had agreed to support his cause. Janoji was apprehensive of a fresh attack by the *Pesva*. He, therefore, sent his envoy Cimanaji Rakhamangad Citnis to the *Pesva* for a talk. The *Pesva* refused to listen to the envoy and asked Janoji to send Devajipant to Poona, as he considered Devajipant to be the mischief-maker in the *Pesva*—Bhosle altercation. Madhavrav arrested Devajipant and marched on Berar. The *Pesva* was accompanied by his generals Gopalrav Patvardhan and Ramacandra Ganes Kanade. The *Nizam* sent a force of eight thousand strong under Rukna-ud-daula and Ramcandra Jadhav. The *Pesva* with the forces s of his ally occupied Bhosle's territory to the west of the Wardha river. The relatives of Janoji had taken shelter into the fort of Gavilgad. Jewellery too was removed to this place. Janoji with his forces encamped at Tivasa to the west of Wardha river, (7-12-1768).

The *Pesva* did not chase Janoji. He took the fort of Amner (20-1-1769), and straightway proceeded to Nagpur. Nagpur was looted and burnt. The burning of Poona by Janoji was fully avenged. The fort of Bhandara was besieged and reduced by Ramacandra Ganes.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NPI, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> NPI., p. 175.



The fort of Candrapur or Canda, the strong-hold of the Bhosles was the next target of attack. The fort was besieged by the *Pesva's* army. Janoji who was outside moved from place to place carrying on a running warfare with the *Pesva's* army. In order to relieve the pressure on the fort of Canda, Janoji spread rumours that he was marching towards Poona to release Raghunathrav from the custody. At the same time Devajipant who was in the custody of Madhavrav managed to receive secret letters from Janoji stating that when the *Pesva* was engaged with the siege of Canda, Janoji should attack Poona and set Raghunathrav free. The letters were intended to be seized by *Pesvas* intelligence department. This ruse had its effect. The *Pesvas* apprehension of Janojis attack on Poona was strengthened. When these rumours gained currency Poona was in the grip of consternation as the memory of Janoji's first invasion was yet fresh.<sup>1</sup> The *Pesva* at once decided to raise the siege of Canda and sent his men against Janoji. He sent a letter through Rukna-ud-daula to Janoji on 3rd March 1769, expressing his desire for peace. Janoji who was eager to end the war sent his terms and the treaty was finalised on 23rd March 1769, near Kanakpur. Devajipant was the principal figure on behalf of the Bhosle in bringing about this treaty.

The following were the terms of the treaty of Kanakpur :—

(1) Janoji was granted a *jagir* of 32 lacs in 1763, out of which he was allowed to have only 8 lacs in 1766; Janoji should now relinquish all claim over the *jagir*.

(2) The lands of the Bhosles of Akkalkot confiscated by Janoji should be released.

(3) The Bhosles used to collect *ghasdana* from the Aurangabad *Subha* belonging to the *Pesva*. They should discontinue this practice. The Bhosles likewise should stop collecting *ghasdana* from the *Nizam's* territory. The Bhosles would get their *ghasdana* collections from the *Pesva* and the *Nizam* from their officers. The Bhosles should themselves collect *ghasadna* only if the *Nizam's* Officers fail to do the same for them.

(4) The Bhosles should serve the *Pesva* with their army when called.

(5) The Bhosles should make no changes in the strength of their army without the permission of the *Pesva*.

(6) The Bhosles should not shelter rebels and disloyal persons coming from the *Pesva* territory.

(7) The Bhosles should not enter into political negotiations with the Emperor of Delhi, the *Navab* of Oudh, the Rohillas, the English and the *Nizam* without the consent of the *Pesva*.

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<sup>1</sup> NPI., p. 179,

(8) The Bhosles should pay an annual tribute of Rs. 5 lacs to the *Pesva* in five instalments.

(9) The army of the *Pesva* while passing through the Bhosle's territory would use the old routes.

(10) The *Pesva* should not interfere with the domestic affairs of Janoji so long as he was looking after his relations properly.

(11) Reva, Mukundpura, Mahoba, Carthane, Jintur, Sakarkheda., Mehekar should be given to the *Pesva* by Janoji.

(12) The Bhosle should send his army to Orissa only if is not required by the *Pesva*.

(13) The *Pesva* should help the Bhosle with his army in the event of an invasion on the latter's territory.<sup>1</sup>

Madhavrav and Janoji met at Mehekar ceremonially. Parties and presents were exchanged. The *Nizam's divan* Rukna-ud-daula was also present at Mehekar<sup>2</sup>.

A careful analysis of these terms shows that Madhavrav's aim was to bring central control in the Maratha confederacy, which was so necessary for its growth and survival. From the days of Bajirav I, the *Pesvas* were struggling hard to assert their authority over the Bhosles of Nagpur in their capacity as prime ministers. There was no clear constitutional ruling on this point except the prevailing practice. The Bhosles in their own way considered themselves as the equals of the *Pesvas*. All accepted the overlordship of the *Chatrapati*. But after the death of Sahu his successors proved to be nonentities. Under the circumstance the *Pesvas* tried to assert their authority over others with a good degree of success up to Madhavrav.

During Janoji's *Sena Saheb-Subhaship* Purusottam Divakar *alias* Devajipant Corghade of Narkhed rose into prominence. He secured for Janoji huge sums of money required for war. In his dealings with Madhavrav *Pesva*, Divakarpant was his chief adviser. Madhavrav considered Devajipant as the Machiavelli at the Nagpur Court. He was a full wise man out of the three and a half wise men of the day.<sup>3</sup> For some time towards the end of Janoji's career Dvakarpant lost his master's confidence and fell on evil days. But he was always looked upon as the inevitable man on critical occasions because of his keen grasp of events. Very few original papers are available about this diplomat of Nagpur. He died in 1781. Among other persons of note of Janoji's times may be mentioned Bhavanipant Munsii, Bhavani Kalo and Ganes Sambhaji. Bhavanipant Munsii became Janoji's counsellor when Devajipant fell from his favour. Bhavani Kalo rose to the position of the general. For

<sup>1</sup> NPL, pp. 181-183.

<sup>2</sup> NPL, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> The three and a half wise men were popularly known as Deva Sakhya, ' Vitthal and Nana. Deva stood for Devajipant, Sakhya for Sakharam BapuJ Bokil, Vitthal for Vitthal Sundar at the Court of the *Nizam* and Nana was ml Earnous Nana Phadnis.

sometime he was the *subhedar* of Katak. He constructed the temple of Balaji at Vasim and installed the image. The last, Ganes Sambhaji too acted as the *Subhedar* of Katak.<sup>1</sup>

#### **MUDHOJI BHOSLE.**

Janoji Bhosle had no son. He had decided to adopt Raghuji, the eldest son of his brother, Mudhoji. After the treaty of Kanakpur, he was on good terms with Madhavrav *Pesva*. Janoji travelled to Thevur near Poona, where Madhavrav was on his deathbed and secured his consent to Raghuji's adoption. From Thevur he went to the holy places, Pandharpur and Tulajapur. He died at Yeral (Naldurg), on his homeward journey on 16th May 1772, owing to severe stomach-ache. Mudhoji built a monument in honour of Janoji and secured some land from the *Pesva* for its maintenance.<sup>2</sup>

After the death of Janoji the house of Bhosles was plunged into family feud worse than the one that was witnessed at the death of Raghuji-I. Prior to his death Janoji had secured the consent of the *Pesva* for regularising the adoption of Raghuji II, as he was himself without a son. But the actual adoption ceremony had not been gone through. Neither was the title of *Sena Saheb Subha* conferred on Raghuji II, officially. Exploiting these lapses Sabaji the younger brother of Mudhoji approached Madhavrav *Pesva* for the grant of *Sena Saheb-Subhaship*. As Mudhoji was a partisan of Raghunathrav, Madhavrav sent the robes of *Sena Saheb-Subhaship* for Sabaji with his agent Ramaji Ballal Gune. At the same time Daryabai the widow of Janoji, joined Sabaji and declared that she was pregnant and would give birth to a posthumous child. This created an embarrassing situation for Mudhoji<sup>3</sup>. The success of the parties at Nagpur thus depended upon the powerful personality in the family dissensions of the *Pesvas* at Poona. Family disputes for power and position broke out in every Maratha confederate state. Neither the Bhosles nor the *Pesvas* were an exception to this state of affairs.

As a safety measure Mudhoji sent his family members into the fort of Canda and collected a force of 25,000 strong to face Sabaji. The armies of the two brothers met at Kumbhari near Akola in 1773. After a few engagements the two brothers decided to close the fight. It was agreed that *Sena Saheb-Subhaship* should go to Raghuji II and actual administration should be looked after jointly by Mudhoji and Sabaji.<sup>4</sup> The Prabhu brothers Vyankat Kasi and Laksman Kasi were deputed to Poona for securing the robes of *Sena Saheb-Subhaship* for Raghuji. At this time Narayanrav was the ruling *Pesva*. This arrangement proved unsuccessful as Sabaji was dissatisfied with it. In the rivalry between Narayanrav and Raghunathrav, Sabaji took the side of the former while Mudhoji supported the latter. Sabaji sought the aid of the *Pesva* and the

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<sup>1</sup> NPI, pp. 187-193.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>3</sup> NPI p. 195.

<sup>4</sup> NPI p. 197.

*Nizam*, and the combined forces laid siege to Ellicpur as its *Navab* was a partisan of Mudhoji. But in 1773, when Narayanrav *pesva* was murdered, Sabaji's party was considerably weakened and he openly supported the *Barabhais*. Mudhoji's cause was greatly strengthened when Raghunathrav assumed power after murdering his nephew. A compromise was brought about between Mudhoji and Sabaji, which in its own way was destined to be short lived. The *Nizam*, who had taken the side of Sabaji, drew upon himself the wrath of Raghunathrav. The *Nizam* was attacked and forced to enter into treaty with Raghunathrav. With the Bhosle the *Nizam* formed the treaty of Sixty-Forty.<sup>1</sup>

The family dispute between Mudhoji and Sabaji was finally set at rest when the latter was killed in the Battle of Pancganv near Nagpur on 26th January 1775. In this battle Mudhoji was joined by the *Gardi* Muhammad Yusuf, one of the murderers of Narayanrav.<sup>2</sup> The Pancganv battle gave Mudhoji a free hand in the political affairs of Nagpur. Daryabai and the other partisans of Sabaji quietly surrendered to Mudhoji.<sup>3</sup>

For some time in 1775, the *Barabhais* instigated Sivaji Bhosle of Amravati to rise against Mudhoji. They promised *Sena-Saheb-Subhaship* to Sivaji. This move was deemed necessary by them as their rival Raghunathrav had the support of Mudhoji Bhosle. On 6th March 1775, Raghunathrav entered into an alliance with the British at Surat in order to oppose the *Barabhais*. The rising of Sivaji Bhosle of Amravati could not assume any serious proportion due to the timely mediation of Divakarpant.<sup>4</sup>

The fratricidal wars among the Marathas were fully exploited by the English for the expansion of their power. In 1775, when the Poona court was faced with extraordinary situation following the assassination of Narayanrav, the British forces moved from Bombay and took the fort of Thana. In fact the British had been casting their covetous eyes on the island of Sasti (Salsette), since long, for the safety of Bombay. The fort of Thana surrendered on 28th December 1773.<sup>5</sup> This was the actual beginning of the First Anglo-Maratha war which terminated in the Treaty of Salbye in 1782. Raghunathrav, in his quarrel with the *Barabhais* finally embraced the British giving them the long sought opportunity of interfering with the internal affairs of the Marathas. Raghunathrav became a British protegee by the Treaty of Surat, (6th March 1775). With a view of curbing the growing ambition of the British and their aggression Nana Phadnis proposed an anti-British Confederacy consisting of the *Pesva's* Government, the *Nizam*, Haidar Ali and the Bhosles of Nagpur. At this time the prestige of the British had suffered a set back in the eyes of the Indian powers due to the unscrupulous methods of Warren Hastings. This was rather the

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<sup>1</sup> NPL, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> NPL, p. 205.

<sup>3</sup> NPL, p. 205.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>5</sup> NHM., Vol. III, p. 43.

opportune time for the Marathas to move against the British as they were engaged in a long war with the French. But the well-conceived quadruple alliance could not be worked out because of the machinations of Warren Hastings. Realising the danger of the alliance proposed by Nana Phadnis, Hastings restored Guntur to the *Nizam* and detached him from the Confederacy. His next move was the seduction of the Bhosles of Nagpur.

According to the plan of Nana Phadnis, the Bhosles were to attack the English in Bengal, Haidar Ali to proceed against Madras and the Poona forces to harass the British in Gujarat and Bombay. To execute a part of this joint plan, a large force under Khandoji Bhosle popularly known as Cimanaji marched towards Orissa. Cimanaji was a man of courage and action. He was instructed to invade Bengal for the collection of *cauthai* which was in arrears. But at the eleventh hour he was prevented from stepping into Bengal by Raghuji II on the advice of his crafty minister Divakarpant Corghade. Hastings was able to purchase the loyalty of both Khandoji and Divakarpant by bribing them heavily. By the end of 1778, Goddard had secured Mudhoji's permission for the passage of his army through the latter's territory into Gujarat. Nana was enraged at this and immediately sent for Raghuji and Divakarpant and secured their support to his four-party alliance.<sup>1</sup> But the two never kept their word.

Mudhoji Bholsa who was a sworn member of the Confederacy was the first to inform Hastings of Nana's plan. It was he who prevented Khandoji Bhosle from invading Bengal. Mudhoji, in all these activities had violated the Treaty of Kanakpur between Janoji and Madhavrav. It was presumed that he would observe the treaty to which his elder brother Janoji was a party. But at the critical juncture he cast the previous bindings to the winds and went ahead recklessly allying himself with the British and their protege Raghunathrav for selfish gains. The role played by Mudhoji, Raghunathrav and their supporters is indicative of the state of affairs prevailing among the ruling Maratha noblemen.

In 1785, Mudhoji had been to Poona with his army to help Nana Phadnis in the war against Tipu Sultan. The battle was fought at Badami—1786 in which the *Nizam*, the Bhosles and the *Pesvas* jointly defeated Tipu. Cimanabapu distinguished himself in this war. On his homeward journey Mudhoji payed a visit to the holy places in Maharastra and returned to Nagpur. Mudhoji died at Nagpur on 19th May 1788,<sup>2</sup> after a very active political career of over two decades.

Towards the end of Janojis career Divakarpant had fallen from his grace and was imprisoned. His property too was confiscated. Mudhoji who needed his help most released him. Divakarpant was soon restored to his former position and served Mudhoji as his

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<sup>1</sup> NHM., Vol. III, pp. 97, 98.

<sup>2</sup> NPI, pp. 213, 214.



principal Counsellor. Mudhoji was never loyal either to the *Bara-bhais* or to Nana Phadnis. Throughout his career he supported Raghunathrav.

#### **RAGHUJI BHOSLE II.**

At one time he was prepared to serve as the vassal of Warren Hastings severing his relations with the *Pesva*. Divakarpant had to tow the line of his master. But in doing so he could have impressed upon his master as to what was ultimately good for the Maratha nation as a whole. This naturally required a man of high moral character. It could not be expected of Divakarpant who was enjoying the confidence of Warren Hastings, to rise above self-interest. Divakarpant was bribed by Hastings in order to dissuade the Bhosles from the quadruple alliance of Nana Phadnis. Thus, the full-wise man out of the noted three and a half-wise men of the Maratha country, proved to be otherwise in the large national interests.

The title of *Sena Saheb-Subha* was finally conferred on Raghuji in 1775, during the *Pesvaship* of Savai Madhavrav.<sup>1</sup> Actually he was designated for this title much earlier but sanction for the same could not be had from Poona, because of the strained relations between the *Pesvas* and the Bhosles. Raghuji assumed power after the death of his father Mudhoji.

Raghuji's relations with Nana Phadnis were amicable. In the Battle of Kharda, 1795, Raghuji sent his army under Vitthal Ballal *Subhedar* to help the *Pesva*. Vitthal Ballal distinguished himself in this war and was highly honoured by Nana. Raghuji's gains in this war were substantial. He received territory worth three and a half lacs from the *Nizam* for the *ghasdana* of the Gangthadi region. The *Nizam* agreed to pay his arrears to Raghuji amounting to Rs. 29 lacs. It was decided that both should share the revenues of Berar as in the past. New *sanads* of the territory to the south of the Narmada, were granted by the *Pesva* to Raghuji. *sanads* of this territory were granted to the Bhosles by Nanasaheb *Pesva* but the officers of the latter had not given the actual possession so far. Raghuji got the possession of Husangabad, Cauragad and Bacai. Raghuji stuck to the party of Nana Phadnis even after the tragic end, of Savai Madhavrav. In appreciation Nana gave Raghuji Rs. 5 lacs in cash and the possession of Gadha-Mandla.

The *Raja* of Sagar gave Raghuji a part of his territory for the help he had rendered in the event of an attack by one Amirkhan. Similarly, the fort of Dhamoni was secured from a petty Rajput Chieftain and Husangabad from the *Navah* of Bhopal by Raghuji. Thus, by 1800, Raghuji's kingdom was at its zenith. It was the largest of the Maratha states towards the close of the eighteenth century.

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<sup>1</sup> NPI., pp. 300-302.

The following account might give some idea of the territory and its revenue under Raghuji-II<sup>1</sup>:—

<i>Territory</i>	<i>Revenue Rs.(in lacs)</i>
1. Devagad, including Nagpur	30
2. Gadha-Mandla	14
3. Husangabad, Sivani-Malva, Cauragad, etc.	7
4. Multai or Multapi	2
5. Half the revenue of Berar and of Gavilgad, Narnala, etc.	30
6. Orissa and the other feudatory states in the area.	17
7. Candrapur or Cada	5
8. Chattisgad and the other feudatory states like Bastar, Sambalpiir, Sirguja, Kankar, Kalahandi, Jasapur and Gangpur.	6

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These figures of revenue from the different parts of the territory under Raghuji appear to be true. Raghuji, however, was destined to see the decline of the Bhosle house when called upon to face the powerful East India Company.

In 1798, Lord Wellesley came to India as the Governor-General. His objective was to bring the Indian States under 'Subordinate Isolation' by his most potent weapon of 'subsidiary system'. Mysore was the first of the Indian States to be forced to accept the subsidiary alliance. The *Nizam* was the next to enter it for self-protection. Bajirav II in his wars with the Maratha potentates and in particular with Yasvantrav Holkar, embraced the subsidiary treaty in 1802. Thereafter the Maratha states one after another sold their freedom for a mess of pottage. Under the circumstances, it was not easy for Raghuji to keep himself out of the iron trap laid by Wellesley. As early as 1799, Mr. Colebrooke was sent to Nagpur to persuade Raghuji to enter the subsidiary alliance. He stayed in Nagpur for two years but was not successful in bringing Raghuji under the alliance<sup>2</sup>

The Treaty of Bassein in 1802, by which Bajirav II bartered away his freedom was highly resented by Yasvantrav Holkar. Daulatrav Sinde and Raghuji Bhosle, too, were upset by Bajirav's decision. After the Treaty of Bassein Lord Wellesley had been pressing upon Daulatrav and Raghuji to enter into a similar alliance with the British without delay. It was clear that Wellesley was trying to hold aloof Daulatrav and Raghuji. Col. Collins was deputed for negotiations with the two chiefs. They evaded a definite reply in order

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<sup>1</sup> NPI, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> NHM., Vol. III, p. 402.

to gain time, whereupon, Col. Collins left the Sinde's camp. On 7th August 1803, General Wellesley proclaimed a war against Bhosles and the Sindes, and called upon the general populace to keep itself aloof from the struggle,<sup>1</sup>

The fort of Ahmadnagar which was equipped with munitions and supplies was attacked by Wellesley. Sinde's European Officers who were bribed and seduced went over to the English. Sinde's Brahmin keeper of the fort finding the position untenable surrendered the fort on 12th August 1803. The Bhosle's army joined the Sindes near Jalanapur and a stiff action took place culminating in the battle of Assai on 24th September. The Marathas fought well but were finally defeated. The loss on the English side was heavy, 663 Europeans and 1,777 Indians were killed in action. Stevenson next captured Burhanpur and Asirgad, the two strongholds of the Sindes. These successes of the English depressed both the Sindes and the Bhosles. On the 6th November Sinde's agent Yasvantrav Ghorpade came to Wellesley's camp to arrange the terms of peace.<sup>2</sup>

The Bhosles were now singled out by Wellesley and Stevenson advanced against the fort of Gavilgad. The Sindes sent their force to help the Bhosle, violating the truce they had made with the English. The two armies met on the vast plain between Adganv and Sirasoli. The Maratha guns played havoc among the English army forcing them to flee. But the English Generals collected their forces again and attacked the Marathas. In the last action the Marathas were defeated. The battle of Adganv thus decided the fate of the Marathas on the 29th November 1803. The fort of Gavilgad fell on 25th December when its keeper Benisingh Rajput died fighting.<sup>3</sup>

On 17th December Raghuji Bhosle signed a treaty at Devaganv near Ellicpur with the English.

The terms of the treaty of Adganv were as follows :—

(1) The Bhosle should surrender the territory to the west of the river Wardha as also the provinces of Katak and Balasore. The Bhosles were to retain for themselves the forts of Gavilgad and Narnala and the territory under these forts worth Rs. 4 lacs; i.e., the paraganas of Akot, Adganv, Badnera, Bhatkuli and Khatkali.

(2) Any dispute between the *Nizam*, the *Pesva* and the Bhosle should be settled through the mediation of the English.

(3) The Bhosles should have no relations with any European Power. The English too should have no relations with either the enemies or relatives of the Bhosles.

(4) The Bhosles should have no relation with any members of the Maratha Confederacy.

(5) Both the parties should have the envoy of the other at their Courts.

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<sup>1</sup> NHM., Vol. III, p. 402.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 410, 411.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. III, p. 412.

(6) The Bhosles should respect the treaties which the English have formed with the former's feudatories lying between Orissa and Chattisgad<sup>1</sup>

Berar was given to the Nizam for the help he rendered to the English. By this treaty the Bhosles practically lost their independent status. The territory under them was now confined to Nagpur and the neighbouring area.

The English were successful in keeping Yasvantrav Holkar out of the picture in their struggle with the Sindes and the Bhosles. They fully utilised the hostility between Daulatrav and Yasvantrav. The long cherished dream of the English to secure the coastal strip stretching from Calcutta to Madras was fulfilled.

Daulatrav Sinde too, signed a treaty with the English at Suraji-Anjanganv on 30th December 1803.

According to the 5th terms of the treaty of Devaganv, Mount Stuart Elphinstone was sent to Nagpur as the British resident. He forced Raghuji to give up his sovereignty over the States to the east of Nagpur. Smarting under the recent defeat he had suffered at Devaganv, Raghuji was trying to reorganise his army and secure news about Yasvantrav Holkar's movement so that he might take revenge upon the English if a suitable opportunity permitted such action. But the Resident kept a close watch over Raghuji's movements and desisted him from keeping any contact with Holkar and his men<sup>2</sup>

With the fall of the Sindes and the Holkars the marauding bands of the *Pendharis* became the scourge of the restless times. They fell upon the peasants and the citizens and looted their property. Where resistance was offered they indulged in killing and raping. With the fall of their supporters, the Sindes and the Holkars, the cruelties of the *Pendharis* became all the more wanton. They have been rightly described as the scavengers of the Maratha army.

One of the leaders of the *Pendharis*, Amirkhan attacked Jubbulpore in about 1809. The local *Subhedar* of the Bhosles, Jijaba Ghatge tried his best to defend the city but was defeated and forced to take shelter in the fort of Mandla. In order to defend the Narmada region from the *Pendhari* inroads Raghuji appointed Vitthal Ballal *Subhedar*, Benisingh *Jamdar*, Raghunathravbaji Ghatge and Muhammad Amirkhan of Sivani.

At one time the *Pendharis* looted Ramtek and Bhandara and appeared in the suburbs of Nagpur. The Bhosles' officers Siddik Ali Khan and Maloji Ahirrav were finally able to force them to retreat.<sup>3</sup> It was Lord Hastings who exterminated the *Pendharis* by conducting an all out campaign against them.

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<sup>1</sup> NPI., p. 344.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 361-362.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 373-375.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 877-78.

During the Bhosle-English wars the *Navab* of Bhopal had taken Husangabad and Sivani from the Bhosles. In 1807, Raghuji sent his army and captured Cainpurvadi and Cankigad of the Bhopal territory. Later he entered into an agreement with the Sindes for a concerted attack on Bhopal. The two armies besieged Bhopal fort in 1814. But Raghuji withdrew his forces when the *Navab* of Bhopal asked for British help.<sup>1</sup>

Sambalpur and Patna (near Orissa.) were granted back to Raghuji in 1806.

After the battle of Adganv the Governor-General was trying to persuade Raghuji to accept the subsidiary alliance. Jenkins, who succeeded Mount Stuart Elphinstone as the resident of Nagpur, once again appealed to Raghuji that he should allow the stationing of the British army at Nagpur. But Raghuji skilfully avoided all such appeals. In 1811, when the *Pendharies* burnt some wards of Nagpur city Raghuji asked for British help, but was refused as Raghuji was not willing to enter into the subsidiary alliance.

In 1801-02, on the occasion of the *Sinhastha Parvani*, Raghuji with the members of his family had been to Dharmapuri on the bank of the Godavari for a bath.<sup>2</sup>

Raghuji's relations with his brother Vyankoji *alias* Manyabapu were not happy. Manyabapu enjoyed the title of *Senadthurandhar*. He was brave and adventurous. He died at Kasi in 1811.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Colebrooke the great Sanskrit scholar, who was deputed to Nagpur as an envoy in 1799, has left a lively description of Raghuji. Raghuji lived in a spacious palace surrounded by gardens. The palace had six quadrangles or *cauks* each of which had a three storeyed structure. The drawing hall in the palace was well decorated with chandeliers and pictures. The hall which was meant for the *Raja* had beautiful carving. The garden around the palace had good roads enclosed by fencing.

Raghuji was not fond of pomposity either in dress or manners. He was sweet-tongued and behaved in a friendly manner even with his subordinates. He was, however, careful in maintaining the decorum and discipline of the *darbar*. During leisure hours all were entertained by singing and dancing. Raghuji was fond of hunting, so much so that when a tiger was reported in the neighbourhood he often hastened to the place with his party leaving the office work. He, however, never neglected administrative duty. Sridhar Laksman Munsli and Krsnarav Citnis were the most trusted courtiers of Raghuji.

The *Dasara* festival during Raghuji's reign was a brilliant spectacle displaying his grandeur and glory.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NPI, pp. 377-378.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>3</sup> NPI, p. 386.

<sup>4</sup> NPI, pp. 312-14.



**PARASOJI BHOSLE.**

Raghuji loved his kith and kin and was extremely fond of children. Bakabai was his favourite queen. He was pious and devoted to his mother. But Raghuji lacked quick decision and courage. In the war with the English he often left his fighting forces. He was willing to wound yet afraid to strike. In diplomacy he was no match for the contemporary Englishmen with whom he was required to deal.

**PARASOJI BHOSLE.**

After the treaty of Devaganv, Raghuji, it seems, was in financial difficulties. His anxiety for wealth grew with age bringing him into disrepute. He was nicknamed the big *baniya* for the methods he used in collecting money. Raghuji who had the good fortune of witnessing the glory of the Bhosle house at its zenith was also destined to see its decline. He died on 22nd March 1816.

Raghuji II was succeeded by his son Parasoji in 1816. Parasoji was paralytic, blind and mentally deranged. His father's efforts to improve him proved fruitless. Bakabai, Parasoji's step-mother brought him to her palace and took charge of the administration with the help of Dharmaji Bhosle, Naroba Citnis and Gajabadada Gujar. Dharmaji was an illegitimate son of Raghuji and was the custodian of the royal jewellery and treasury.

Next to Parasoji the only other claimant to the Nagpur *gadi* was Appasaheb Bhosle. He was a smart young man having support of many courtiers, as Parasoji was practically insane. Ramcandra Vagh and Manbhat were prominent among his chief supporters. They were trying to seduce the partisans of Parasoji. Thus after the death of Raghuji Nagpur Court had two factions, one headed by Appasaheb and the other led by Bakabai, Dharmaji and others with Parasoji on the ancestral *gadi*.

Appasaheb had no claim over the *gadi* as Parasoji was the son of Raghuji. The army was under the command of Dharmaji, Siddik Ali Khan and Gajabadada. Appasaheb impressed upon the courtiers that it was not desirable that Dharmaji, a bastard, should manage the affairs of the Bhosle house. The resident Mr. Jenkins was secretly backing Appasaheb as he was counting upon him to accept the subsidiary alliance which Raghuji had been carefully avoiding all through his life. When Siddik Ali Khan smelt this his loyalty to Parasoji and Bakabai wavered. He sat on the fence ready to jump to the side of the winning party. Appasaheb called Dharmaji for meeting on 11th April 1816 and got him arrested. He took possession of the *Raja* and his treasury. Without any further loss of time Appasaheb ceremoniously performed the coronation for Parasoji. He personally held the *cauri* over Parasoji's head and walked barefooted in the procession taken out in honour of the *Raja*. A grand *darbar* was held in which the *Raja* was made to proclaim the appointment of Appasaheb as his regent. Mr. Jenkins graced the occasion by his presence, lending stability to Appasaheb.

Dharmaji was murdered on 5-5-1816<sup>1</sup>; Appasaheb's evil intention of occupying power for himself was thus finally fulfilled. He entered the subsidiary alliance with the English on 28-5-1816, bartering away the independent status of Nagpur which Raghuji II had maintained with great difficulty. The important terms of this alliance were—

(1) For the protection of Nagpur the English were to maintain six platoons of foot-soldiers and one of cavalry. The king was to pay seven and a half lac of rupees for the maintenance of this force.

(2) The king was to grant territory worth this amount in case of his failure to pay it,

(3) The king too was to keep a contingent force of 3,000 soldiers and 2,000 horses at his own expense, to be supervised by the Resident in respect of its pay, discipline, provision, etc.

(4) All foreign affairs should be conducted only through the English Resident.

(5) The king should not engage in wars with the friends of the English.<sup>2</sup> This alliance was brought about through Appasaheb's envoys Nagojipant and Narayan Panditji. The former received an annual pension of Rs. fifteen thousand from the English for his successful mediation.

Part of the English subsidiary force moved from Ellicpur to Nagpur under General Dovetone and the rest was stationed at Kalamesvar near Nagpur to strengthen Appasaheb's position. Afraid of the machinations of the rival party Appasaheb's left the palace and took residence in the *Telankhedi* Garden.

On the morning of 1-2-1817 Parasoji was found dead in his bed. Appasaheb was out of station. It was rumoured that Appasaheb managed to throttle Parasoji to death by seducing his body-guards Sadikmanu *Bhaldar* and Janu Bansod. The Resident absolved Appasaheb of the murder charge which was thickly run rumoured at this time, but later, when he tried to break the bonds of subsidiary alliance he was conveniently made the culprit.<sup>3</sup>

#### **APPASAHEB BHOSLE.**

After Parasoji's death, Appasaheb being the only heir to the Nagpur *gadi* his succession ceremonies were gone through quietly on 21st April 1817. The moment Appasaheb assumed charge of Nagpur he began to feel the weight of British supremacy which he had accepted by the subsidiary alliance. His efforts hereafter were directed to overthrow the British yoke. The Resident suspected that Appasaheb was in contact with Bajirav *Pesva* and the Sindes. The agents of one of the *Pendhare* leaders Cittu were openly honoured in the *darbar* by presenting dress. As a precautionary measure Col. Adams was asked to move his force to the south of the Narmada to meet any emergency. Similarly, Scott left Ramtek for Nagpur.

<sup>1</sup> NPI, p. 397.

<sup>2</sup> NPI, P. 399.

<sup>3</sup> NPI, pp. 403-404.

It was in this atmosphere that Appasaheb decided to receive the robes of *Sena Saheb-Subha*, formally, from Bajirav *Pesva*. 24th November 1817 was decided as the day for receiving the robes in the *darbar*. Appasaheb invited the Resident for this ceremony. But the latter declined it as war had broken out with the *Pesva* in Poona, and informed Appasaheb that he should not receive the honours from the enemy of the British. In spite of this opposition Appasaheb received the robes and the title in the *darbar*. This was considered as a breach of the subsidiary treaty by the Resident and a war with Appasaheb seemed imminent.<sup>1</sup>

Like Bajirav, Appasaheb too wanted to free himself from the shackles of the subsidiary treaty. He was helped in this task by Manbhat, Ramcandra Vagh, *Subhedar* Nimbalkar and Narayan Nagare. Appasaheb's Arab soldiers occupied a position between the city and Sitabuldi. He had a total force of 18 thousand men and 26 guns while the English force numbered only 1,800.

Having come to know the movements of the Maratha army, the Resident ordered Lt. Col. Scott to occupy the Sitabuldi hills. Scott had two battalions of Madras Native infantry, two companies of Native infantry and three troops of Bengal Cavalry. He was equipped with four six-pounder guns. Strategically the Marathas committed the first blunder in allowing Scott to occupy the hills.

The *Rajas* palace was in the present Mahal area which was protected by the Sukravar *darwaja*. This was the fort.

The English had taken shelter in the Tulsibag, about the 24th December 1817.

The English residency was situated to the west of the Sitabuldi Fort, i.e., on the site of the present Nagpur *Mahavidyalaya*. The English had their treasury to the west of the smaller hill of the two Sitabuldi hills. The southern hill spreads from east to west and is the bigger one. The smaller one is to the north. The two hills roughly rise above the ground to a height of hundred feet and are separated by the same distance.<sup>2</sup>

Peace talks were in progress when both the sides were preparing for war simply to gain time. On the evening of 26th November 1817, the Arabs of Appasaheb opened fire on the smaller hill. He sent a message to the Resident saying that this had been done against his orders. Appasaheb throughout this war was wavering making the position of his loyal supporters like Manbhat most awkward. It is possible that the mercenary Arabs might have acted on their own without waiting for the orders of their master but this speaks for Appasaheb's lack of leadership. Appasaheb, after his defeat, pleaded that his Arabs opened fire on the orders of Manbhat.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NPI, p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> NPI., pp. 411-13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 417.

The fire of the Arabs was well replied by the English guns on the hills. Captain Lloyd was in charge of the bigger hill. Captain Sadler was killed by a shot while he was defending the small hill. On the morning of 27th the Bhosle's forces approached the hill. The smaller hill was attacked and occupied. The English were in a confused state. The Arabs were preparing to launch an attack on the bigger hill. The English would have lost the battle but for the brave and spirited attack of Captain Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald's determined onslaught pushed the Marathas back and they broke in all directions. This infused new spirit in the English soldiers who were drooping from fatigue. A combined attack of the cavalry and infantry finally won the day for the English.<sup>1</sup>

It was Manbhat and his Arabs who really fought well bringing victory within easy reach for the Marathas.<sup>2</sup> But lack of concerted action and Appasaheb's vacillation were mainly responsible for the defeat of the Marathas. Appasaheb in order to save himself pleaded to the Resident that all was done by Manbhat without his orders. Bakabai too towed his line. Thus, in war, Appasaheb proved to be a coward and in defeat acted most disgracefully. Manbhat, Ramcandra Vagh, Ganpatrav *Subhedar* and their supporters were against any talk of peace. When Doveton was preparing to attack the city, Appasaheb walked into the protection of the Resident on 16-12-1817, at about 9 o'clock in the morning.<sup>3</sup> The masterless Marathas fought one more battle known as the battle of Sakkardara only to lose.<sup>4</sup> Manbhat with his Arabs and North Indian soldiers totalling 5,000, defended the city from behind the fort.

But he was helpless when the Arabs in a divided state of mind were seduced by the English. They left Nagpur on the 30th when the arrears of their pay were cleared. The Union Jack was hoisted on the old palace of the Bhosles on the same day. Poor Manbhat was arrested and later died in prison.<sup>5</sup>

Appasaheb signed a treaty on 6-1-1818 with the English in which he was bound by terms stricter than those of the subsidiary alliance.

The terms of the treaty were :—

1. Appasaheb was to surrender the forts of Gavilgad, Nurnaja and the territory attached to them, along with the states, Sirguja and Jaspur.
2. The civil and military administrations of Nagpur was to be conducted through the Resident.
3. Appasaheb was to stay in Nagpur under the supervision of the Resident.

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<sup>1</sup> NPI. p. 422.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 423.

<sup>3</sup> NPI., pp. 428-29.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 430.

<sup>5</sup> NPI., p. 434

4. Appasaheb was to pay the arrears of pay of the subsidiary army.
5. He was to surrender any fort which might be asked for by the English.
6. He should hand over all those who acted against his order in the war
7. The Sitabuldi hills were to be surrendered to the English along with the neighbouring area they might ask for.<sup>1</sup>

This sealed the fate of Appasaheb as also of Nagpur once for all.

These terms of the treaty were ratified by the Governor General.

With the surrender of Appasaheb Bhosle the outlying posts of Jubbulpore, the forts of Sivani Dhirud (south-east of Nagpur), Gavilgad, Cauragad, Narnala and Mandla fell to the English without much resistance. The fort of Mandla which was protected by the river Narmada offered resistance for sometime. But when its keeper Raya Hajari ran away, the beleaguered force numbering 1,100 surrendered.<sup>2</sup>

After his surrender, Appasaheb was reinstated on his ancestral *gadi* and allowed to stay in the palace. For three months things appeared to move smoothly. On 19th February 1818, Bapu Gokhale, the last great general of Bajirav fell fighting in the battle of Asta. Bajirav lost all hope of regaining his position and took to heels begging for help till his surrender to Malcolm. During his flight he was at Vasim for a while and then camped at Pandharkavada. He was accompanied by Ganpatrav Subhedar one of the generals of Appasaheb. It was rumoured that Bajirav would be joined by Appasaheb and both would march to Canda which was yet in the hands of its keeper Gangasingh. Jenkin's suspicion that Appasaheb was in correspondence with Bajirav was strengthened when a letter from Appasaheb to Bajirav was intercepted by Elphinstone and sent to him.<sup>3</sup> He at once arrested Appasaheb on 15-3-1818. Appasaheb along with Ramcandra Vagh and Nagopant was sent to Prayag, as his presence in Nagpur was considered dangerous.

The fort of Canda fell on 30th May 1818. Its keeper Gangasingh fought desperately till he fell dead along with his trusted followers.<sup>4</sup>

On his way to Prayag Appasaheb escaped from the English camp at Raicur on 13-5-1818. Hereafter began the long flight of Appasaheb.

Appasaheb took shelter in the Mahadev hills of Madhya Pradesh and was helped by Mohansing Thakur of Panmadhi and Cain Sab. of Harai. A few petty Gond Kings too supported Appasaheb in his last days. The English forces under Adams, MacMorin and Scott combed out the Hills and arrested the Gond leaders. Mohansing

<sup>1</sup> NPI, pp. 435-36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 438-444.

<sup>3</sup> NPI, p. 445.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 473.



and Cain Sah were taken into custody. Appasaheb made good for the fort of Asirgad, the gateway of the Deccan, on 1st Februar 1819. He was escorted by the *Pendhari* leader Cittu and his followers. Appasaheb was received into the fort by Yasvantrav Lad, its Keeper. The fort was yet in the possession of the Sindes. It was admirably suited for defence. The English moved their men and Material from Malva, Poona, Nagpur and Hyderabad. Prior to the surrender of the fort on 9th April of 1819, Appasaheb had escaped towards Khairi Ghat to the north-west of Asirgad and taken shelter with -a Brahmin at Burhanpur. From there Appasaheb travelled through the territory of the Sindes, Holkars, Jaipur and Jodhpur begging for asylum and took shelter for sometime with Ranjit Sing. The *Raja* of Mandi gave Appasaheb protection for a short time. Finally Appasaheb was found with the *Raja* of Jodhpur. The *Raja* refused to hand over Appasaheb to the English in keeping with the chivalrous traditions of the Rajputs, In 1829 Appasaheb's wandering career came to an end and he spent the remaining part of his life as a guest-*cum*-royal prisoner at the court of Jodhpur. He died in 1840.<sup>1</sup>

During his luckless days Appasaheb desperately moved from court to court begging for help. But he was too late. Had he shown sufficient courage and determination in the battle of Sitabuldi the chances of success were brighter. He let down his honest supporters like Manbhat and Ramcandra Vagh. In expecting aid from Bajirav, Appasaheb was leaning on a reed. After his confinement at jodhpur nobody seems to have been really sorry for the unfortunate Appasaheb. In his fight his wife Umabai supplied him money secretly. His other wife Savitribai who was enjoying a pension at Nagpur did not go to him even after she came to know of his stay in Jodhpur.<sup>2</sup>

### RAGHUJI III.

When Appasaheb was arrested the Resident Mr. Jenkins decided RAGHUJI III. to adopt Bajiba, the son of Banubai, as the successor to the Bhosle *gadi*. Banubai was the daughter of Raghuji II. The adoption ceremony was performed on 26-6-1818 and Bajiba was renamed Raghuji III. He was then only ten years old. It was the Resident who took the entire administration into his own hands during the minority of Raghuji III. Bakabai was to look after the palace affairs. Her ambition to rule may be said to have been fulfilled at least partly. Prior to his retirement the Resident held a grand *darbar* and read out the terms of the treaty with Raghuji III on 1-2-1826. It was ratified by the Governor General on 13-12-1826.

The terms of the treaty were—

(1) The terms of this treaty which were not contradictory to the subsidiary alliance of 1816 were accepted by the *Raja*.

(2) The *Raja* was not to have any relationship with the other Maratha States. He was to retain the title of *Sena Saheb-Subha* but was to relinquish the honours connected with it.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 465.

<sup>2</sup> NPI, p. 466.

(3) The *Raja* should give to the English territory worth Rs. 7.5 lacs for the maintenance of the subsidiary force. He was hereafter not required to keep the contingent force as decided previously by the subsidiary alliance of 1816. The English promised to continue the *raj* in the house of the Bhosles perpetually.

(4) The *raj* was given over to the King as he had come of age.

(5) Canda, Devagad, the territory up the Ghats, Lanji and Chattisgad were to be under the English along with the feudatories of these regions. The *Raja* was to receive Rs. 17 lacs from these territories after deducting the expenses. The *Raja* was to rule over Nagpur and the rest of the territory.

(6) the *Raja* should act on the advice of the English in respect of the appointment of officials, the *Raja's* privy purse and the laws of the territory. The English had the right to inspect the Kings treasury and the accounts of his kingdom.

(7) In the event of maladministration the English were free to appoint their own officers and manage things.

(8) The English were free to take over Sitabuldi or any other fort they required.

Mr. Jenkins gave charge of his office to Captain Hamilton on 29-12-1826 and proceeded to Bombay for further journey.<sup>1</sup>

Jenkins deserves praise for the peace and good administration he gave to the Bhosle *raj* during his ten years' career. He was able to turn the deficit of the kingdom into a surplus treasury. His treatment of the Bhosles was far more considerate than the one meted out to the *Pesvas* by Malcolm. He could have easily annexed Nagpur to the British territory had he meant so.

Jenkins took care to educate Raghuji III. Raghuji was introduced to the Three *R's* and had working knowledge of Persian and *Marathi* though he had no inclination for learning.<sup>2</sup> In the early part of his royal career Raghuji took keen interest in administrative matters but later neglected them. He loved music and dancing and later indulged in gambling to the neglect of his duties. He was addicted to drinking and during his last illness he drank desperately. Apart from these personal vices Raghuji was on the whole a just and good administrator. He was a popular King.

Raghuji was not blessed by progeny though he had in all eight wives. He had one son who died in infancy after whom he probably did not get any issue. He does not seem to have cared for his successor. He probably considered his sonlessness as a blemish and left the question of succession to its own fate. This,

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<sup>1</sup> NPI, pp. 486-88.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 482.

however, proved to be detrimental to the Bhosle House as is borne by facts. Raghuji was not on good terms with Resident Mansel. This might have adversely affected the succession question.

Raghuji had been to Kasi, Gaya and other holy places on a pilgrimage in 1838. He was accompanied by Captain Fitzgerald with his Madras contingent. Raghuji died at the age of 47 after a long illness of 25 days on 11th December 1853. His obsequies were performed by his nephew Nana Ahirarav and it was decided to adopt his son Yasavantrav as the next successor.<sup>1</sup>

#### **ANNEXATION OF NAGPUR.**

The question of adoption to the Nagpur *gadi* was discussed thrice prior to the death of Raghuji III. In 1837 the Resident Mr. Cavendish stated that Raghuji III had no right to adopt as his territory had been conquered by the British and given back to him and his sons. In the absence of an heir apparent or a posthumous child, therefore, the Raja's kingdom should escheat or laps to the British. The views of Resident Wilkinson were in favour of Raghuji. In 1840 he opined that Raghuji or after his death his queen had the right to adopt a son as successor to the *gadi*. The case of Nagpur was in no way different from that of Gwalior or Hyderabad. Actually, according to the treaty of 1826, when Mr. Jenkins was the Resident, the British had promised to continue the *raj* of the Bhosle's in perpetuity. But this term was very conveniently set aside and the Court of Directors in England concurring with the views of Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, ordered that "it had been determined on grounds, both of right and policy, to incorporate the State of Nagpur with the British territories."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mansel, the then Resident, had suggested that Nagpur should be annexed. The final decision of the Court of Directors was proclaimed by Lord Dalhousie, and Mr. Mansel was ordered to take charge of Nagpur, as the first Commissioner. He started working in this capacity from 13th March 1854.

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<sup>1</sup> NPI., pp. 507-508

## CHAPTER 8\*

### THE MARATHAS AND THE NIZAM

#### INTRODUCTION.

THE MARATHA-NIZAM RELATIONS MARK THE MOST IMPORTANT PHASE in the history of Maharashtra during the 18th and 19th centuries. Firstly, because as the *subhedar* of the Deccan, the founder of the ex-Hyderabad State, Nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah controlled more than 3/4ths of the territory of the present Maharashtra and secondly, because till very recently his successors were the rulers of the five districts of Marathwada division covering about one fifth of the State of Maharashtra. The Nizam family belonged to Central Asia. Khvajah Abid, the grandfather of Nizam-ul-mulk on his way to Mecca, first came to India in 1654. On his return he joined Aurangzeb who was then engaged in the war of succession. After holding a number of posts under the emperor, he accompanied the latter to the Deccan in 1681, A.D. Khvajah Abid died in the siege of Golconda in 1687. His son, Sahabuddin, known to history by his titles Gaziuddin and Firoz Jung had also migrated to India in 1670 and had taken up service under Aurangzeb. Like his father, he was also a principal general of Aurangzeb in his war against the Marathas. He outlived Aurangzeb and died towards the end of 1710, when he was the governor of Gujarath.<sup>1</sup>

#### EARLY CAREER.

His son was Mir Qamaruddin,<sup>2</sup> generally known by his various titles, Cinqilic Khan, Asaf Jah and Nizam-ul-mulk, the founder of

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<sup>1</sup> For the last twenty years of his life Sahabuddin was blind, having lost his eyesight in the epidemic at Bijapur, in 1688 A.D.

<sup>2</sup> Nizam-ul-mulk was born on 14th of Rabiul Akhar, 1082 (August 1671). He was named Qamaruddin by Aurangzeb. He received a *mansab* of 450 horse when he was six years old. In his boyhood, he received the title of Cinqilic Khan meaning boy swordsman. He was a favoured nobleman of Aurangzeb. He took part in the Moghal siege of Parali in 1700 A.D. In the 45th year of the emperor's reign, he was appointed the governor of Bijapur province and put in charge of Talkonkan and Azamnagar (Belganv), as *faujdar* and, of Sampaganv as *thanedar*. In the 49th year of the emperor's reign (H. 1116), he was made the *faujdar* of Bijapur-Karnatak. He accompanied Aurangzeb in the siege of Vakinheda. In the war of succession ensuing after the death of Aurangzeb, he did not take any side. When Muazzam ascended the throne in 1707, under the title of Sah Alam Bahadur Sah, Nizam-ul-mulk was called to the court. He was confirmed in his *mansab* and appointed the governor of the province of Oudh and *faujdar* of Lucknow. Shortly after, he retired from service. After the death of Bahadur Sah. Jahandar Sah, the son and successor of Bahadur Sah, called him to the court, gave him a *mansab* of 7,000 and the title of Firoz Jung Bahadur.

the Nizam dynasty of Hyderabad. At the time of the death of Aurangzeb on 20th February 1707, he was the governor of Bijapur. He was disliked by Bahadur Sah for his leadership of the Turani faction in the Moghal court. Historians of this period invariably refer to two principal parties of the nobles at the court, viz., (1) the Moghal or Turani or foreign party which included all adventurers who came from Persia or from beyond the Oxus. The Afghans were also included in this group; and (2) the Hindustani or home-born party which was made up of Muslims born in India, many of them being descendants in the second or third generation of foreign immigrants. The Rajput and Jat chiefs attached themselves to this party as also did the official Khatri class of the Punjab.<sup>1</sup> During the later part of the reign of Bahadur Sah (1707-1712), Nizam-ul-mulk led a retired life. After Bahadur Sah's death and with the enthronement of Farrukhsiyar<sup>2</sup> and rise to the power of the Sayyad brothers,<sup>3</sup> Nizam-ul-mulk was offered the viceroyalty of the Deccan,<sup>4</sup> which he gladly accepted (February 1713).

### **Viceroyalty in the Deccan, 1713-1715.**

The situation in the Deccan at this time was intriguing. The Marathas had succeeded in their uphill struggle against the Moghal invaders. However, their right of collecting *cauth* and *sardesmukhi* from the six *subhas* of the Deccan, viz., Khandes, Aurangabad, Berar, Bidar, Bijapur and Hyderabad depended partly upon their relationship with the Moghal *subhedar* and partly upon their capacity to enforce it. The Maratha State was in great disorder. Administration had become loose and the Maratha noblemen who had fought so gallantly with the Moghals for over 25 years were now wavering in their loyalty to the Maratha State. In such a situation, Nizam-ul-mulk assumed the viceroyalty of the Deccan.<sup>5</sup> The Nizam had been with Aurangzeb throughout his Deccan campaign. He knew the terrain as well as the people who inhabited it. His was a cautious approach to the Maratha problem because he knew the pitfalls which had led Aurangzeb to his discomfiture in his war with the Marathas. He was a post-master in diplomacy. It was against such a redoubtable adversary that the Marathas had to contend. The Nizam was bent upon re-establishing the Moghal supremacy in the Deccan. The Marathas were equally determined to assert their rights. But it was not an easy task. The ascendancy to power of Sahu<sup>6</sup> was not to the liking of his cousin, Sivaji, who had set up a separate State of Kolhapur. After Sivaji had been deposed, his

<sup>1</sup> W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, 1, 272-75.

<sup>2</sup> Farrukhsiyar ascended the throne on 31st December, 1712.

<sup>3</sup> The Sayyad Brothers of Barha Abdullah Khan and Hussain Ali Khan who rose to prominence in 1712, played the role of king makers for the next eight years till their power was overthrown in 1720.

<sup>4</sup> This was consequent upon the death of Zulfikar Khan, who was till then the Viceroy of the Deccan.

<sup>5</sup> *Masire Nizami* of Lala Mansaram, in 18th Century Deccan p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> Sahu was crowned King, on January 12th, 1708.



step-brother Sambhaji continued his activities against Sahu. He allied himself with Nizam-ul-mulk. The Nizam tried every means to curb the power of the Marathas. Later he seduced to his side Sambhaji and Maratha generals, Chandrasen Jadhav<sup>1</sup> and Sultanji Nimbalkar. Sahu and his *Pesva*, Balaji Visvanath tried their best to check the Nizam but without much success. However, in 1715, the Nizam was recalled to Delhi and his place was taken by Hussain Ali Khan,<sup>2</sup> the brother of the Moghal Vazir Sayyad Abdullah.

### Acquisition of the Sanads by the Marathas.

He tried to continue the policy of the Nizam and was engaged in a struggle against the Marathas. Hussain Ali Khan was, however, driven to come to a compromise with the Marathas, owing to the intrigues of the emperor against him and the Vazir Sayyad Abdullah. Sayyad Hussain Ali Khan conceded the demand of Sahu for *cauth*, *sardesmukhi* and *Svaraj*.<sup>3</sup> A Maratha force accompanied Sayyad Hussain Ali Khan to Delhi and following the downfall of Farrukhsiyar,<sup>4</sup> succeeded in securing the *sanads* of grants for *cauth*, *sardesmukhi* and *Svaraj*. These grants were acquired in March 1719. The *sanads* were personally received by the *Pesva*. Their acquisition marks a distinct phase in the Moghal-Maratha relationship. For the first time, the Marathas became the rightful collectors of *cauth* (dated 3rd March, 1719), and *sardesmukhi* (dated 15th March 1719). Recognition was given to the Maratha State.

### Eclipse of Sayyad brothers.

Nizam-ul-mulk was appointed governor of Malwa in 1719. He left Delhi for Malwa on 15th March 1719. His relations with the Sayyad brothers deteriorated rapidly. Under these circumstances he refused the invitation of the Sayyad brothers to go to Delhi and instead, marched straight away to the Deccan. He crossed the Narmada in May 1720. In the battles of Ratanapur<sup>5</sup> and Balapur<sup>6</sup> (1720), the Nizam defeated Dilavar Ali and Alam Ali Khan, the partisans of Sayyad brothers and assumed full control of the province of the Deccan. After this battle, a meeting took place between Bajirav and the Nizam at Cikalhana on 4th January 1721.

<sup>1</sup> On the recommendation of Nizam-ul-mulk, he was made a *mansabdar* of 7,000 horse and received *jahagir* at Bhalki in the *subha* of Bidar.

<sup>2</sup> *Masire Nizami in 18th Century Deccan*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> For details see P.D. 30. 222. Also See *Treaties and Agreements*, Edited by Mawji and Parasnis, 1914.

<sup>4</sup> The dethronement of Farrukhsiyar was followed by a reign of terror let loose. After his deposition, he was cruelly killed two months later. The Sayyad brothers put on the throne two young Princes—Rafi-ud-darjat and Rafi-ud-daula, who together ruled for 9 months. The Sayyad brothers then raised to the throne, Prince Rosan Akhtar, a grandson of Bahadur Sah, with the title of Muhammad on September 18th, 1719. Muhammad Sah ruled till his death in April, 1748.

<sup>5</sup> In this battle Nizam-ul-mulk defeated Dilavar Ali, a partisan of the Sayyad brothers. The battle was fought in June, 1720. Dilavar Ali was killed.

<sup>6</sup> The battle of Balapur was fought between Nizam-ul-mulk and Alam Ali a nephew of the Sayyad brothers, in August, 1720. In this battle the Marathas took a dominant part on the side of Alam Ali. Alam Ali was killed in the battle.

It is very difficult to say what transpired at the meeting. It is possible that a chance understanding between the Marathas and the Nizam took place in 1724 and it was decided that the latter should not interfere in the expansionist aims of the former beyond the Narmada and the former should not interfere with the aspirations of the latter in the Deccan.<sup>1</sup> After the downfall of Sayyad brothers,<sup>2</sup> Nizam-ul-mulk became the prime minister of the Emperor Muhammad Sah in 1722.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Nizam marches to the Deccan.**

He was soon tired of the intrigues and corruption at the Moghal court and returned to the Deccan in 1724. The emperor ordered Mubarizkhan, the deputy viceroy of Hyderabad, to oppose the Nizam. In the battle of Sakharkheda fought in October 1724,<sup>4</sup> Mubarizkhan was defeated and killed. Although the emperor conferred the viceroyalty on the Nizam, yet for all practical purposes the Nizam became independent from 1724. There : was no one to oppose the Nizam in the Deccan and the Delhi emperors were too weak to put a check upon their recalcitrant noble.<sup>5</sup> A new State was thus born.

### **THE FIRST SIGNS OF MARATHA-NIZAM CONFLICT.**

The Marathas under the forceful leadership of Bajirav, who had become the *Pesva* in 1720, now aspired to become an all India power. They were fast obtaining footholds in Gujarath and Malva. The Nizam was not going to be a silent spectator of these turn of events. He was determined to counter the Marathas in every field—political, diplomatic and military. How the Marathas, succeeded in reducing the Nizam to the position of a third rate power is the story of 18th century Deccan.

The Nizam in the first instance challenged the rights of the Marathas (conceded by the 1719 agreement) as represented by Chatrapati Sahu by pointing out to the latter that besides Sahu, there was the other claimant viz., Sambhaji of Kolhapur and the Nizam as the Moghal viceroy of the Deccan could not allow the

<sup>1</sup> This could be substantiated from the anecdotes of Nizam-ul-mulk by Lala Mansaram in *18th Century Deccan*, p. 122, where the Nizam is quoted as saying, in 1724 “ God willing, I will enter into an understanding with them (Marathas) and entrust the *Mulukgiri* on that side of the Narmada to them.”.

<sup>2</sup> Hussain Ali Khan was murdered in September, 1720. Sayyad Abdullah was captured by the imperial forces in November, 1720, and executed on 11th October 1722.

<sup>3</sup> He was appointed prime minister in 1722. He left Azduddovlah Aivaz Khan as his deputy in the Deccan. During his stay in Delhi, Nizam-ul-mulk consolidated his hold over Malva and Gujarath.

<sup>4</sup> Persian Chronicle enumerates a letter by Nizam-ul-mulk to Sahu. which is full of praise for Bajirav (*Shahamat Panah*), Sultanji (*Tahavur Dastagah*) and Pilaji (*Jaladat Intibah*), for their outstanding work in the battle against Mubarizkhan. (*Masire Nizami in 18th Century Deccan*, p. 59).

<sup>5</sup> After the victory, the emperor bestowed upon the Nizam, the title of Asaf jah, perhaps the only wise course of action he could have adopted under the circumstances. The Nizam was also confirmed in the *subhedarship* of the Deccan, under an imperial *farman* which was received on 20th June 1725.

collection of *couth* and *sardesmukhi* by his (Sahu's) chiefs unless the dispute between the two claimants was resolved.<sup>1</sup> The Nizam had with cunning and diplomacy appropriated unto himself the role of an arbitrator between the States of Satara and Kolhapur.<sup>2</sup> Knowing well the weak position of Sambhaji, the Nizam lent his unqualified support to him. He also persuaded the chief, Pratinidhi to oppose Bajirav if he assumed a role contrary to the interests of the Nizam. The Maratha noblemen of the old order advised Sahu to follow a policy of caution, as otherwise an indiscreet step by an adventurous *Pesva* might land the Maratha State into unsurmountable difficulties. But the stubborn *Pesva* convinced Sahu of the correctness of his policy of meeting the Nizam on his own grounds. He outlined the dangers that were involved in the unholy combination of Sambhaj and the Nizam.<sup>3</sup> As a result, Sahu gave up the policy of appeasement. War started in October 1727. It was a long drawn out war. The Nizam wanted to draw the Marathas in the open and annihilate them by the force of his artillery.<sup>4</sup>

### **Marathas humble Nizam at Palkhed.**

Bajirav avoided an open encounter with the Nizam<sup>5</sup> and by following guerilla tactics trapped the Nizam at Palkhed (25th February 1728). Driven to despair by hunger and fearing complete annihilation, the Nizam sued for peace. The Nizam was forced to concede the demands of the Marathas such as *couth* and *sardesmukhi*. He also agreed to recognise Sahu as the head of the Maratha State and not to entertain any political relations with Sambhaji of Kolhapur. The convention was signed at Mungi Sevganv, on 6th March 1728.<sup>6</sup> This convention is important in many ways. According to it the issue, viz., Sahu's claim to *couth* and *sardesmukhi sanads* granted by the Delhi Emperor in 1719, which the Nizam had tried to avoid for about 10 years was finally settled; secondly, the treaty set aside any claim which Sambhaji might have

<sup>1</sup> In this connection see letter written by Sambhaji to *Senapati* Candrasen's agent, Rayaji Malhar, on 23rd July, 1721 (*Raj.* 3.559) ; a letter by Bajirav to Sahu expressing doubts about Nizam's intentions, dated 25th November 1725 (*S. R.* 14. 157); and Sambhaji's letter to Candrasen of February, 1726 [*Dalvi's History of Jadhav Family*, p. 81],

<sup>2</sup> He even seduced Cimnaji Damodar (Sahu's Rajadnya) and offered him Sambhaji's *Pesvaship*.

<sup>3</sup> Sambhaji left Kolhapur on 24th September, 1726, and joined hands with Nizam with whom he was for a period of three years (*R.K.* 8.94,96). He even toured Poona district in 1727 and granted *sanads* in his name to local officials. How deep rooted was the plot the Nizam had envisaged for the destruction of Maratha power, is outlined in the letter which the Nizam wrote to Savai Jaisingh (See text of the letter translated by Sarkar in "*Islamic Culture* ").

<sup>4</sup> The Nizam in the initial stages carried sword and destruction in the Maratha country near Poona, with the help of his Maratha commanders. It was in 1727, that he alongwith Sambhaji entered Poona district and made Poona his headquarters for sometime.

<sup>5</sup> Bajirav left Poona in September, 1727, and ravaged Berar. But hearing of the Nizam's descent on Poona, he swooped upon Burhanpur and Aurangabad to draw away Nizani-ul-mulk. His tactics proved to be correct.

<sup>6</sup> For details of the treaty, see P. D. 15, 86-89.

had to the Maratha State; and lastly, it brought home to the Nizam that the Marathas were a force to reckon with and that any intransigence on his part would not go unpunished.

### **Maratha-Nizam confrontation at Bhopal.**

The battle of Palkhed and the severe reverses the Nizam had suffered at the hands of the Marathas were not expected to keep the Nizam inactive for a long time. Nor did the Marathas rest content with adopting a complacent attitude by assuming that there would no longer be any trouble from the Nizam. The Nizam decided to throw his weight in favour of Dabhade, the Maratha General, who was now at loggerheads with Bajirav *Pesva*.<sup>1</sup> The Marathas also noticed the meeting between the Nizam and Muhammad Khan Bangas, the governor of Malva, on March 17th, 1731.<sup>2</sup> However, before the forces of the two could join hands, Bajirav fell on Dabhade at Dabhai and routed the *Senapati's* forces on 1st April 1731. The Nizam was once again frustrated. The Marathas utilised this opportunity to consolidate their hold on Gujarath. The years that followed witnessed a superficial calm in the Maratha-Nizam relationship. The acquisition of Gujarath had roused Maratha ambitions of further expansion of their power. They had already obtained a foot-hold in Malva which was the gateway to Northern India. This time Malva was invaded early in January, 1737. The motives of the Nizam could best be left to conjecture. A faction in the Moghal court considered it opportune to concede the demands of the Marathas in respect of these provinces. But the Nizam responded to the call of the anti-Maradha party at the imperial court for succour<sup>3</sup> against the Marathas. It was thus that in 1737, the Nizam marched to the North. In 1738, Bajirav once again confronted the Nizam at Bhopal. This was the second direct confrontation between the Marathas and the Nizam. The latter proved no match to the tactical superiority of Bajirav and found himself besieged at Bhopal by the Maratha forces. He had no alternative but to surrender. A formal treaty was signed on 7th January 1738, at Doraha Sarai under which the Nizam undertook to obtain for the Marathas the province of

<sup>1</sup> When Sahu came to know of the activities of Trimbakrav Dabhale in conjunction with the Nizam, he wrote a strong letter, admonishing him severely (P.O. 17.12).

<sup>2</sup> The Nizam marched with his army to Gujarath. He invited Bangas, the governor of Malva, to meet him on the Narmada to form a plan of joint action against the Marathas. But the defeat of Dabhade broke this combination and the Nizam returned to Deccan (*Nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah*, I. 196,97, by Yusuf M. Khan; *Later Mughals*, II, 251, by Irwine). The forces of Nizam numbering over 5,000, took part in the battle of Dabhai, fought between Bajirav and Dabhade, (Gense and Banaji, *The Gaikvads of Baroda*, I. 11).

<sup>3</sup> On reaching Delhi he received the viceroyalty of the Provinces of Akbar-abad, Agra and Malva, on the promise that he would render help to the emperor in containing the Marathas (*Tarikhe Rahat Afza in Marathe Va Nizam*, p. 20). The Emperor also agreed to appoint the nominees of Nizam-ul-mulk to the *subhis* of Allahabad, Ajmer and Gujarath.



Malva under imperial seal. This was indeed a great triumph for the Marathas. Within a period of 30 years after the death of Aurahgzeb, they had seized Gujarath and Malva. The Nizam was humbled.

### THE MARATHA AIMS.

Why then the Marathas, when they had the opportunity to destroy the Nizam first at Palkhed and then at Bhopal, did not destroy him completely? In the first instance, the Maratha resources were not adequate to deal with such an eventuality. The Maratha confederacy was itself divided and any posture by the Marathas aimed at the complete destruction of the Nizam would have raised against them the entire power and resources of the Moghals which the Marathas would have found difficult to overcome. Though independent, the Nizam could always count upon the vast resources of the empire. Moreover, in 1727 complete destruction of the Nizam was not the aim of the Marathas.<sup>1</sup> They wanted the Nizam to be reduced to the position of a subordinate ally and the confrontation between the two was occasioned only when the moves of the Nizam conflicted with the aims of the Marathas. Nizam-ul-mulk had aimed at the complete annihilation of the Maratha power and intended to achieve for himself complete suzerainty over the Deccan.<sup>2</sup> These aims were frustrated due to the masterly leadership of Bajirav. The wishes of the Nizam are succinctly brought out in what he confided to his associates. Says the Nizam “ Some friends suggested to me that I might as well seize the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa as they were not properly managed, but I refused the idea”.<sup>3</sup> This shows the aspirations of the Nizam. At one time or other he had possessed himself of Gujarath, Malva, Ajmir and Agra.

In April, 1740, Bajirav died, soon after inflicting a heavy defeat on Nasir Jung, the son of Nizam-ul-mulk in January-February of 1740.<sup>4</sup> The Nizam must have heaved a sigh of relief when he learned of the death of Bajirav, who represented the expanding power of the Maratha State, on 28th April 1740.

<sup>1</sup> It is very interesting to note that after the battle of Palkhed, Sahu wrote to Bajirav “ You must on no account inflict any loss upon Nizam-ul-mulk or injure his susceptibilities. We enjoin this on you as a sacred obligation to the memory of your revered father.”

<sup>2</sup> Read in this connection the communication addressed by Nizam-ul-mulk to Abdul Nabi Khan, in April, 1730, translated by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in “*Islamic Culture*”.

<sup>3</sup> *18th Century Deccan*.

<sup>4</sup> Persian chroniclers of Nizam-ul-mulk such as Sayyad Muhammad Ali—*Tarikhe Rahat Afza*, Gulam Ali—*Khajana i Amira* and others give a wrong version of the battle between Nasir Jung and Bajirav, claiming that Bajirav was heavily defeated. Grant Duff in his *History of the Marathas*, adopts the same line. This view is positively wrong because if Nasir Jung was a victor, why did he cede Handia and Kharganv to Bajirav ? These two districts were handed over to the Marathas by the treaty of Mungi Sevganv signed on February 17th, 1740.



### **BALAJI BAJIRAV AND NIZAM 1740-1760.**

The mantle of the leadership of the Maratha nation now fell upon the shoulders of young Balaji Bajirav<sup>1</sup>, son of Bajirav. Taking the young *Pesva* to be an amateur in the game of politics, the Nizam grew evasive about the cession of Malva promised to the Marathas. But Balaji marched on towards Delhi and by a threatening posture compelled the emperor to agree to the cession of Malva<sup>2</sup>. The Marathas had thus succeeded in checking the territorial ambitions of the Nizam.

### **The Marathas lose Tamilnad to the Nizam.**

However, the failure of the Nizam in curbing the northward ambitions of the Marathas did not prevent him from confronting the Marathas wherever possible. It was when Balaji and Raghuji Bhosle of Nagpur had come to grips in the North and when no succour was expected that the Nizam descended with a huge force in Tamilnad and drove the Marathas out in 1743.<sup>3</sup>

The Maratha possessions in Tamilnad were thus permanently lost to them.<sup>4</sup> It was the last confrontation between the first Nizam and the Marathas.

### **The death of the Nizam.**

Nizam-ul-mulk died at Burhanpur on 21st May 1748. His age at that time was 77 years. He was perhaps the greatest enemy of the Marathas after Aurangzeb. By every means at his command he had tried to weaken the Maratha power, though without success.

### **NEW PHASE IN MARATHA-NIZAM RELATIONSHIP.**

The death of the first Nizam and, after an year, that of Chatrapati Sahu,<sup>5</sup> put the Maratha-Nizam relationship in a different context to the changed political situation in the Deccan. With the death of Nizam-ul-mulk, the State of Hyderabad entered a difficult period. At Satara, the death of Sahu resulted in the transfer of the political scene from Satara to Poona, and the *Pesva*, now unhindered by any binding obligations towards the Chatrapati, became free to follow his policies according to his own choice. The second son of the Nizam, Nasir Jung, succeeded Nizam-ul-mulk as the Nizam and the viceroy of the Deccan. Nizam-ul-mulk had, on the whole, succeeded in maintaining his possessions in the Deccan and the South. Though the Marathas had many notable achievements to their credit in their confrontation with the Nizam till 1748, the greater part of Maharashtra was still under the yoke of the Nizams. A time had now come for the Marathas to carry the expansion of the Maratha power into the Deccan as they had done in Central and Eastern

<sup>1</sup> Balaji Bajirav was invested with the robes of *Pesvaship* on June 15, 1710.

<sup>2</sup> The deed granting the *suhba* of Malva was ratified on 4th July, 1741, under the emperor's seal and final orders were issued on 7th September, 1741.

<sup>3</sup> He first took possession of Arcot and appointed his nominee Anvaruddin Khan as its governor. He captured Tricinopoli on 29th August, 1743 from the Marathas (*Parasnis Itihas Sangraha, Ati. Sthale, Tricinopoli*).

<sup>4</sup> Chatrapati Sivaji had effected the conquest of Tamilnad in his campaign of the South, during 1677-78. The Marathas had lost the province in 1698. They had occupied it, under Raghuji Bhosle in 1741.

<sup>5</sup> Sahu died on 15th December 1749.

India by the acquisition of Gujarath, Malva and Bundelkhand<sup>1</sup> and by the extension of their activities in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Nasir Jung, who had succeeded the Nizam, did not survive long. He was killed on December 16th, 1750 in the war against his nephew,<sup>2</sup> Muzaffar Jung (son of Nizam-ul-mulk's daughter), who was helped by the French who had now started taking a leading part in the political affairs of the Deccan. Muzaffar Jung also met with the same fate as his maternal uncle when he was killed on 14th February 1751, by the disgruntled Pathans in his army.

### **Intrigues in the Court of the Nizam.**

The French, who now practically controlled the court of Nizam, raised Salabat Jung, the third son of the Nizam, to the throne in 1751 A.D.<sup>3</sup> The fratricidal war that was raging in the Nizam family gave the Marathas the opportunity they were waiting for. The *Pesva* invaded Aurangabad and subsequently marched to meet the Nizam who was returning to his dominions with the French general Bussy.<sup>4</sup> The shrewd minister of the Nizam, Raja Raghunathdas prevailed upon him to seek compromise with the Marathas temporarily. The Nizam agreed to pay the ransom demanded by the *Pesva* under the terms of the treaty of Pangal signed in April, 1751.<sup>5</sup> But no sooner had the *Pesva* retired than the Nizam started playing the old game of his father. At the connivance of Tarabai (wife of Rajaram), who was at Satara, a plot to overthrow the *Pesva* was contrived by the shrewd minister of the Nizam.<sup>6</sup> Both the Nizam and his minister, backed as they were by the disciplined troops under the French, were confident of overthrowing the *Pesva* and destroying Maratha power in the Deccan. The Nizam left Aurangabad on 31st October 1751. The *Pesva* had already left Poona on 4th October. The Nizam fought his way to 12 miles from Poona when intrigues and lack of supplies brought his army to a halt.

### **Treaty of Singva.**

The intrigues at the court of the Nizam initiated by Sayyad Laskar Khan who favoured a settlement with the Marathas forced the Nizam to fall back<sup>7</sup> and hostilities came to an end with the signing of the treaty of Singva on 6th January 1752. This was positively not a favourable settlement from the point of view of the Marathas. Not only that but they had every reason to be apprehensive of the growing strength of the Nizam, backed as he was by the French. The *Pesva* was

<sup>1</sup> For details see *Tarikhe Rah of Afza in 18th Century Deccan*, pp. 197-98

<sup>2</sup> See *P. D.* 25. 93, 94, 95

<sup>3</sup> R.K. 3.377, A; *P. D.* 25. 105, 109, 110.

<sup>4</sup> No formal *sanad* about the *subha* of Gujarath was issued by the emperor. The Marathas in fact possessed the whole of Gujarath. Malva was acquired in 1742. For the expansion of Maratha power in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Raghuji Bhosle was mainly responsible.

<sup>5</sup> It may also be mentioned here that the *Pesva* likewise hesitated to open hostilities with the Nizam, backed as the Nizam was with the powerful French artillery. See R.K. 3.377, 378; *N.R.* 52; *P.D.* 25.115, 117, 118, 123.

<sup>6</sup> For the activities of Tarabai, see R. K. 3.71, 73. Also *Purandare Daftar*, pp. 172, 178.

<sup>7</sup> For details of the battles see *pur. Daf.* 1.372, *Pur. Roj.* p, 73; R.K. 6,232; 3.400.

now eager to find a delicate spot in the political armour of the Nizam whereby he could strike a hard bargain.<sup>1</sup> The opportunity occurred unexpectedly in the person of Gaziuddin, the eldest son of the late Nizam-ul-mulk.<sup>2</sup> He promised to pay the Marathas 50 lakhs of rupees and cede the province of Khandes permanently to the Marathas if the latter would agree to instal him in place of his brother, Salabat Jung, as the viceroy of the Deccan.<sup>3</sup> The time was opportune because the scheming prime minister of the Nizam, Raja Ramdas, had been murdered by his soldiers on 30th April, 1752. The Marathas could now, not only succeed in destroying the influence of the French in the court of the Nizam but also be in a position to reduce the Nizam to the status of a subordinate ally. Gaziuddin started his march from Delhi towards the Deccan and it seemed as if circumstances would play into the hands of the *pesva*. But fortune favoured Salabat Jung, as Gaziuddin died of illness shortly after his arrival in the Deccan on 16th October 1752,<sup>4</sup> suspected to be from the effects of poisoning. The Marathas, however, would not allow their plans to go waste.

### **Maratha victory over the Nizam at Bhalki.**

They attacked Salabat Jung at Bhalki and forced him to fulfil the promise of the cession of the province of Khandes made out to them by Gaziuddin. The convention of Bhalki was signed on 24th November 1752.<sup>5</sup> The affairs at the court of the Nizam were not, however, very happy. The French had become all powerful. Sayyad Laskar Khan, the prime minister, was dismissed and his place was taken by Sah Navaz Khan<sup>6</sup> who too resented the growing influence of the French. If not for anything else at least with a view to *weaken that influence*, he decided to be friendly towards the Marathas. The Nizam co-operated with the Marathas in their campaigns in Karnatak in 1756. The Marathas were not happy at the brilliant performance of the French-trained forces in this campaign. They wanted to destroy the influence of the French and humble the power of the Nizam. The *Pesva* planned a brilliant strategy to entangle the Nizam in the web of family dispute and suggested to him to dismiss Bussy and to free his brothers Nizam Ali, Basalat Jung and Mir Moghal who were in detention.<sup>7</sup> The Nizam freed his brothers. They were posted as governors of Berar,

<sup>1</sup> The manoeuvres of the *pesva* at this stage are described in R.K. 3.405.421.

<sup>2</sup> P.D. 25-127 state that a *farman* was issued by the emperor appointing Gaziuddin to the *subhedari* of the Deccan.

<sup>3</sup> The Maratha partisanship has been finely brought out in *Kavye San Patre. Kadi.* 102, 103, and P.D. 25.144.

<sup>4</sup> It is said that he was poisoned by some maid servants belonging to Nizam Salabat Jung. Some allege that the mother of Nizam Ali invited him for meals at Aurangabad and poisoned him.

<sup>5</sup> P. D. 25.144, 147, 149; 26.202.

<sup>6</sup> He was appointed prime minister in December 1753.

<sup>7</sup> *Tarikhe Rahat Afza in 18th Century Deccan*, p. 209.

Bijapur and Aurahgabad, respectively. Bussy then left for his *jagirs*.<sup>1</sup> The opportunity for which the Marathas were waiting had arrived. Differences developed between the Nizam Salabat Jung and his prime minister Sah Navaz Khan who invited the Marathas to invade the Nizam's State.<sup>2</sup> He offered the Marathas 30 lakhs of rupees as compensation for the expenses involved in the expedition. The Marathas invaded the territory of Hyderabad with a large army.<sup>3</sup> The Nizam was forced to sign the treaty of Sindkhed (1758) involving a cession of territory yielding 25 lakhs of rupees.

### Exit of the French.

The compromise was hurriedly effected on the news of the return of Bussy from the east,<sup>4</sup> neither side wanting the French to regain the influence they had lost in the court of the Nizam. Of all the sons of Nizam-ul-mulk, Nizam Ali Khan, the governor of Berar was the most ambitious. Meanwhile, Bussy had returned to Aurahgabad. Hyder Jung, a protege of Bussy wanted to destroy Nizam Ali Khan and assert himself at the Nizam's court. But he himself was treacherously murdered on 11th May 1758, at the connivance of Nizam Ali Khan. Though the subsequent events do not concern the Maratha-Nizam relations, it needs to be mentioned here that the murder of Hyder Jung led to the murder of Sah Navaz Khan by the agents of the French. This happened in 1758.<sup>5</sup> When the conditions at the court of the Nizam were thus full of dangerous possibilities, the Anglo French hostilities in Europe led to the recall of Bussy. Nizam Ali Khan, the governor of Berar and the younger son of Nizam-ul-mulk, marched to Hyderabad and became the *de facto* ruler of Hyderabad, in 1759.

### The defeat of the Nizam at Tandulja (Udgir).

With the French out of the picture, the Marathas now decided to invade the territories of the Nizam. An army of Marathas under Sadasivrav Bhau annihilated the rear guard forces of the Nizam in February 1760, at Tandulja.<sup>6</sup> The Nizam agreed to a truce and ceded a territory yielding an annual revenue of 60 lakhs of rupees by the treaty of Udgir.<sup>7</sup> This included the forts of Ahmadnagar and Daulatabad and the districts of Solapur, Ahmadnagar, Nasik and Bijapur. Two-thirds of the present Maharashtra now came to be the part of the Maratha Raj. When the Marathas were steadily liquidating the Nizam, the great disaster of Panipat fell upon them in 1761. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Marathas took long to recover from this terrible shock. This was the opportunity for which the Nizam Salabat Jung and his brother Nizam Ali Khan were eagerly awaiting. The Pesva Balaji

<sup>1</sup> R.K. 1.25.

<sup>2</sup> The details of this could be found in *Aitihasik Lekh Sangraha*, 1.10.

<sup>3</sup> For additional information about this campaign, see B.K. .173-119; 11.100.

<sup>4</sup> *Tarikhe Rahat Afza* in *18th Century Deccan*, p. 212.

<sup>5</sup> All these happenings are graphically described in “ *Tarikhe Rdhat Afza* in *18th Century Deccan*”, pp. 213-16.

<sup>6</sup> The details of the Udgir campaign could be found in P.D. I, P.P. XXV. 202.275. R.K. 1.154.165.

<sup>7</sup> P.D. 25.281.



Bajirav had died of the shock of Panipat on 23rd June 1761. In the north, the Rajputs, Jats and others had risen against the Marathas. At this crisis, what was required was a man of strong will power who would regain the lost glory and put down the enemies of the Marathas.

### **PESHVA MADHAVRAV AND THE NIZAM.**

Such a person was Madhavrav, the second son of Nanasaheb, who assumed *Pesvaship* on July 20th, 1761. But, in the initial years, all authority was wielded by his uncle Raghunathrav. When the Nizam marched against Poona<sup>1</sup> in November 1761, Raghunathrav, to gain his support in his future disputes with Madhavrav, came to an agreement with him at Uruli Kancan on 5th January, 1762, by offering the Nizam territory worth 27 lakhs of rupees.<sup>2</sup> Nizam Ali Khan had nothing to loose but all to gain. He retraced his steps to Hyderabad fully satisfied with the outcome of events. He deposed Salabat Jung, the Nizam, and<sup>3</sup> seized all power. As the Nizam he was to rule in Hyderabad for nearly forty years. The rift between Madhavrav and Raghunathrav widened and Raghunathrav went over to the Nizam and invited him to attack Madhavrav.<sup>4</sup> Forced with the bleak prospects of the destruction of Maratha State, Madhavrav surrendered to his uncle<sup>5</sup> (13th November 1762), who foolishly handed over to the Nizam all the territory acquired from him after the battle of Udgir.<sup>6</sup> The Maratha State was now in wilderness. The pressure of Hyder Ali of Mysore was increasing and the wily Nizam with the help of his prime minister Vitthal Sunder was posing a great threat to the Maratha State. He even offered the Chatrapatiship to Janoji Bhosle,<sup>7</sup> and marched with a great force against the Marathas. Both the Nizam and the Marathas devastated each other's territories.<sup>8</sup> The Nizam sacked Poona in April-May, 1763,<sup>9</sup> whereas the Marathas laid waste the Nizam territory from Aurangabad to Hyderabad.<sup>10</sup> On the news

<sup>1</sup> The Nizam in his march desecrated Hindu temples and burnt villages. The sack of Poona was felt imminent and people started evacuating Poona. *P.D* 38.30, 32, 38, 47, *R.K.* 1.44, 52.

<sup>2</sup> *P.D.* 20.128 ; *R.K.* 10.2 ; *Aitihāsik Patre*, 103.

<sup>3</sup> July 1762. Salabat Jung was confined in the fort of Bidar. He was killed at the instance, it is said, of Nizam Ali Khan, on September 9th, 1763.

<sup>4</sup> Raghunathrav fled from Poona towards Nasik on 29th August 1762. He entertained Muhammad Murad Khan, an officer of Nizam-ul-mulk. The state of mind of the people is graphically described in a letter written by Sahaji Bhapkar to the *Pesva* at this time (*P.D.* 19.2).

<sup>5</sup> *P. D.* 19.14; *Purandare Daftar*, 3.10,73.

<sup>6</sup> The Nizam met Raghunathrav on 24th November 1762, when this deed was executed.

<sup>7</sup> *Aitihāsik Poire* 104; *P.D.* 20.134, 137 ; 38.78, 79, *Aitihāsik Tipne*, 1.32.

The Nizam and Janoji Bhosle agreed in a meeting on 9th February, 1783, near Gulburga that 60 per cent. of the new acquisitions as a result of their join endeavours should go to the former and the remaining 40 per cent. to the latter.

<sup>8</sup> The graphic details of this running battle are given in *Khazana-i-Amira* of Bilgrami in *18th Century Deccan*, pp. 239-40.

<sup>9</sup> *P.D.* 38.102.

<sup>10</sup> *P.D.* 38.83.



of the sack of Poona, the Marathas hurried towards Poona. On the way, they seduced Basalat Jung, the brother of Nizam Ali Khan, with a promise of raising him to the Nizamship in place of Nizam Ali Khan. The Nizam now knew that he was caught in a trap. He hurriedly started his retreat towards Aurangabad. On the way, his chief ally Janoji Bhosle left him.

### **The battle of Raksasbhuvan.**

While the Nizam was camping at Raksasbhuvan on the southern bank of the river Godavari, the Marathas struck at him on the 10th of August, 1763, and completely routed his forces killing 10,000 of his troops.<sup>1</sup> He was hotly chased upto Aurangabad where he was surrounded. It was the same story as that of Palkhed, Bhopal and Udgir. With no alternative left, the Nizam surrendered to the Marathas a territory yielding an annual revenue of 80 lakhs of rupees. The treaty was signed on 25th September, 1763.<sup>2</sup> His prime minister Vitthal Sunder had been killed in the battle of Raksasbhuvan. His place was now taken over by Ruknuddovlah<sup>3</sup> who was a nominee of the Marathas. The Marathas virtually forced the Nizam to accept a prime minister of their choice. The humiliation of the Nizam at Raksasbhuvan completely changed the complexion of Maratha-Nizam relationship. The Nizam no longer remained a menace that he was before. It had taken the Marathas nearly half a century of diplomacy, tact and military manoeuvring to reduce the Nizam to a third rate power. From this position he never recovered, even after the destruction of his arch enemies, the Marathas, at the hands of the English. In the Maratha-Mysore wars, the Nizam played a secondary role. In 1769, the *Pesva* Madhavrav decided to punish the recalcitrant Janoji Bhosle for the role he had played in the sack of Poona. In this campaign, the Nizam played a role subsidiary to the Marathas.

### **Death of Madhavrav and subsequent confusion.**

The *Pesva* Madhavrav died on 18th November, 1772. His brother and successor Narayanrav was murdered on 30th August, 1773. Raghunathrav was a party to the plot. A civil war broke out. Raghunathrav assumed power and marched against the Nizam.<sup>4</sup> In the battle fought at Bidar, the forces of the Nizam were defeated.<sup>5</sup> The Nizam concluded a peace by offering a territory worth 12 lakhs of rupees to the Marathas. But the position of Raghunathrav had become shaky at Poona. He was deposed by the council of *Barbha is* who declared in favour of the still unborn child of Narayanrav. The Nizam backed the *Barbhais*<sup>6</sup> Raghunathrav solicited the help of the English, with the result that

<sup>1</sup> For details of this battle see *Madhavrav Roj.* 1.343: *AM. Tip.* 3.29; *P.D.* 38.105-06; *Am. Patre*, 105; R.K. 10-21.

<sup>2</sup> See for details *Aid. Tip.* 2.18, 3.29; *Mad. Roj.*, 1.243, *K.S.P.* Y. 33.492.

<sup>3</sup> *Tarikhe Rahttt Afza* in *18th Century Deccan*, p. 254. His name was Mir Moosa Khan Bahadur Ihtisam Jung.

<sup>4</sup> The territory of Nizam was invaded between November 1773 and February 1774. See *Tuzuke Asafia* in *18th Century Deccan*, pp. 281-282.

<sup>5</sup> The action was fought on 29th November, 1773.

<sup>6</sup> *Tuzuke Asafia* has given details about the meeting between the Nizam and Sabaji, Trimbak Mama, Taroji Akade, Cimmaji Pandit and others representing the Marathas (3rd March 1774). The Nizam himself undertook a campaign against Raghunathrav, *18th Century Deccan*, pp. 283-285.

the first Anglo-Maratha war broke out which lasted till 1784. In this struggle, the Nizam maintained a neutral attitude.

After the conclusion of hostilities against the English, the Marathas and the Nizam marched against their common enemy, Tipu Sultan of Mysore in 1785.

The Maratha-Nizam campaign against Tipu was indecisive and came to an end with the treaty of Gajendra Gad in 1787. The English now, took a lead and a tripartite alliance against Tipu consisting of the English, the Marathas and the Nizam, was formed on 1st June 1790. The allies defeated Tipu. The Mysore campaign came to a close in 1792, when Tipu was deprived of half of his possessions.

The Marathas were now free to settle their accounts with the Nizam. The Nizam who had been offered a treaty of guarantee by the English assumed that they would support him in his conflict with the Marathas.

#### **The battle of Kharda and after.**

The English, however, maintained a strictly neutral attitude throughout the conflict.<sup>1</sup> The Nizam was completely humbled at the battle of Kharda fought on 11th March, 1795. This was the last of the series of battles fought between the Marathas and the Nizam. The Nizam had to yield a territory worth 35 lakhs of rupees. This covered practically the whole of the present Marathvada. The treaty was, however, never implemented. The tragic death of Savai Madhavrav, the *Pesva*, in October, 1795, threw the Maratha State into confusion. Bajirav II, the son of Raghunathrav, became the *Pesva*. In the intrigues which preceded his accession, the Nizam was freed from implementing the treaty. The agreement of Mahad [1796] by which the Nizam received back all that he had lost at Kharda was ratified by the *Pesva* Bajirav.

#### **The Nizam becomes a vassal the English.**

The Nizam, initially suspicious of the English, was driven by of his fear of the Marathas to accept the subsidiary alliance with the English by the treaty of 1800 A.D. He thus became their vassal, The Nizam was guaranteed protection against all the powers including the Marathas. When in September, 1803, the Sinde and the Bhosle invaded the Nizam's territory, the English went to the latter's help and decisively defeated the Maratha forces at Assaye.<sup>2</sup>

#### **THE END.**

Under the terms of the treaty of Devganv, signed on 17th December 1803, between the Bhosles and the English, the Bhosles were forced to give up all claims on Berar, west of the river Wardha. This province was fully restored to the Nizam. The Sindes were also forced to make territorial concessions to the English under the treaty of Surji Anjanganv signed on 30th December, 1803 with the English. The territory lying

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<sup>1</sup> R.K 22-32; Hastings' Frazer, *Appendix Q*.

<sup>2</sup> The battle of Assaye was fought on 23rd September. 1803.

between the Ajantha and the Godavari taken from the Sinde was Landed over to the Nizam by the British. In 1818, when the territories of the *Pesva* were taken over by the British, the Nizam was freed from the obligations of *cauth*. Till 1853, the Nizam continued to hold Berar. In that year, the East India Company took over Berar (in the nature of mortgage) from the Nizam. The province was never returned to him. Even with these losses, the Nizam's State covered an area of more than 82,600 square miles, of which the Marathi speaking districts covered about 24,050 square miles. This was roughly about one-fifth of the present State of Maharashtra. These districts formed a part of the State of Hyderabad till 1956 A.D. when they finally became a part of the present State of Maharashtra.



Maharashtra State Gazetteers



## CHAPTER 9

### MARATHA SOCIETY AND CULTURE

#### MARATHA COUNTRY.

**MAHARASHTRA, THE WESTERN PART OF THE DECCAN**, is the homeland of the Marathas. It lies between the 16th and 22nd degree of north latitude extending from Daman to Goa. on the west; the Satpuda range forms its northern boundary; an irregular line joining Canda to Goa and passing through Nanded, Bidar, Solapiir and Belganv, marks off the south-east limits of the region.

The establishment of the independent Maratha State and its expansion in the 18th century were responsible in fixing these boundary lines. Grant Duff writing in 1826 remarks, 'Maharashtra is that space which is bounded on the north by the Sautpoora (Satpuda) mountains; and extends from Naundode on the west, along those mountains, to the Wyne Ganga (Wainganga), east of Nagpoor (Nagpur). The western bank of that river forms a part of the eastern boundary until it falls into the Wurda (Wardha). From the junction of these rivers, it may be traced up the east bank of Wurda to Manikdroog (Manik-durg), and thence westward to Mahoor (Mahur). From this last place a waving line may be extended to Goa, whilst on the west it is bounded by the ocean.'<sup>1</sup> Elphinstone practically bears out what Duff has said.

The region is divided in three distinct parts; the Konkan borders on the sea with its fast running rivulets opening into creeks and small ports, its humid climate, its torrential rains, and its rice crop, is divided from the mainland by the massive watershed of the Sahyadri or the Western Ghats which run parallel to the sea-coast right from Surat down to Goa and beyond a few miles inland. This mountain-range about twenty to twenty-five miles in breadth is the distinctive feature of Maharashtra. It determines the rainfall, the vegetation, the character of the people and has had a decisive influence on their history. The heavily-laden rain-clouds that the south-west monsoons drive before them, burst against this massive wall of granite and inundate the coastal strip, the hilly region and

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\* This Chapter is contributed by Dr. V. G. Dighe.

<sup>1</sup> Grant Duff, *History of the Maharattas* (1921 ed.), Vol. I, p. 3.



the valleys. A belt of deep forest formerly covered the hills and spread for some distance to the plains. Pressure of advancing agriculture has denuded the plains of forest, but the hills yet remain wooded. All along the hills the summits are frequently crowned at the top by large flat basaltic rocks. These huge blocks of granite, have been transformed into fortresses which look impregnable. In many of them there are springs of good-water; a supply can be secured in tanks from the rains from June to October. During the rainy season with cascades tumbling down the hills, with the rivers in spate and valleys inundated, the hill-sides become inaccessible and are completely isolated from the outside world. In fair season the tangle of brushwood and thick forests, and the winding paths in rugged hills make the movements of large troops in the tract difficult, if not impossible. The terrain offers every advantage to the defenders.

The *Des* country or the open plateau is the main Maratha country. The valleys of the Godavari, the Bhima, the Nira, the Krsna are fertile, but the rest of the country is barren. The main crop is not wheat, but the hardy millet—*Jovar* or *Bajra*—which is the staple food of the people.

South of the Satpuda, there are four great ranges of hills running west to east extending beyond the ordinary spurs of the Sahyadri mountains. The Candore hills passing through Nasik district extend from Rahuri to Berar, the Ahmadnagar hills from Junnar to Bhir, the Poona range from Bhore to Indapur and the Mahadev hills cover the Satara district. The general aspect of Maharashtra is thus hilly. Though the climate is salubrious, the country on the whole is rugged and rough, the soil is poor and rainfall precarious. The toil of the peasant brings but a moderate reward. There is little scope for the accumulation of wealth.

Under these circumstances no big cities and no thriving marts grew in the region and the forbidding aspect of nature had little attraction for invaders. Though the Muslim conquerors occupied the central plains, the hill-sides and valleys were left to the local chiefs in nominal allegiance to the Sultans. The niggardly nature and his wild surroundings bred in the Maratha, the virtues of simplicity, manliness, self-reliance, perseverance, courage, a sense of social equality and pride in the dignity of man. It also made him narrow, parochial and selfish.

#### THE PEOPLE.

What kind of people occupied this tract in the 18th century and made it famous in history ? To outsiders the people of Maha-rastra are known by the generic term Mahrattas or Maratha:, though in the State itself the term is restricted to the community which follows the agricultural profession and forms the backbone of its society. Though there are divisions of castes and sub-castes, the

differences are not so sharply marked as in other States and the striking feature of the homogeneity has been remarked upon by anthropologists from the days of Risley (1908). The reasons for this homogeneity lie in the racial composition of the people, the rise of the Maratha language and its use by all classes of people, the religious reform movement of the middle ages which attacked Brahmin orthodoxy, breathed a liberal spirit and made men feel equal, and the prominent part played in the political history of the country by the great peasant community of the Marathas, from which sprang not only Sivaji, the founder of the Maratha State but several other notable families and which in a way moulded the way of life of the people of the region.

The people of Maharashtra are of mixed origin : the migrating *Aryans* from the north came in contact with the earlier residents of the region and in the course of centuries came to form the Maratha people. The Aryans came in three waves as is evinced by the *Puranic* legends of Parasuram and Agasti; they came much earlier than the Sakas or Scythians who came on the scene much later and who were supposed to be the progenitors of the Marathas. The latest position has been so lucidly stated by Dr. Mrs. Iravati Karve that one cannot do better than summarise her argument.

“ Anthropometric data reveals the following facts. The tribals inhabiting the north-west corner of Maharashtra and the northern mountainous region are in a class by themselves and fall apart from the rest of the population of Maharashtra. They are short, dolichocephalic with broad flat noses. Among these the *Varli*, the *Bhils*, etc., have very small heads and very broad noses. The *Gonds*, *Govars* belong to a slightly different category. The *Bhils*, *Varlis*, *Gonds*, it is surmised, are the original inhabitants of the country. When a pastoral people cleared the valleys and plains these aborigines retired to the mountainous regions. There are references to *Nisads* and *Kirats* in Sanskrit and Pali literatures. They seem to be the first colonisers in this country, and belong to the Australoid or the Vedda races. Though these forest tribes are on the border of Maharashtra, there has been some admixture from them among the rest of the Maratha population. The immigrant people employed the tribals as labour on land and some of them took tribal wives and their mixed progeny formed new castes. The process of mixing continues even now. Almost all castes Brahmins, peasants, artisans, in Maharashtra show a small element of admixture with the tribals.’

The second category is comprised of the Maratha peasantry. A few of them broad-headed are found in the eastern and western region, but the numerous and powerful Maratha peasantry are medium-headed with prominent noses. The *Madhyandin* Brahmins in no way differ from the Marathas.”

“Closely related to this category, but with heads slightly bigger and wider is the third category in the western region. The members of this category now follow professions other than agriculture, but the main stock is Maratha. Mixing with later migrants from the north may be responsible for the slight variations in the physiognomy of the category.’.

“The *Agris*, *Khaire Kunbis*, *Manes* are very near the tribals. The *Mahars* and *Mangs* come midway between the tribals and the Marathas. *Madhyandin* Brahmins cannot be distinguished from the Marathas. *Rgvedi Desastha* Brahmins stand midway between the Marathas and the western located group. This leads to the conclusion that the Marathas, most of the Brahmin castes, the Prabhus bear such close resemblances to each other as to be included in one common category. This class came in lesser or greater contact with the early dolichocephalic tribes and other tribals and gave rise to other castes. Some castes appear to have come from the north in modern times. Caste groups are formed not on the basis of social status but on the principle of geographical distribution. The natural divisions of Maharashtra are the central plateau, the valley of the Purna and the Wainganga, the Konkan, Bombay island and the mountainous region. The shape of the head changes as one travels from Bombay to the east. The anthropometric data is clear on the point that the Marathas are racially different from the Rajputs. Wherefrom the Maratha and the kindred Maratha castes came is not clear. The Rajputs are heard of from the seventh century. But much before this the Satavahana kings are reported to be opposing Saka or Scythian invasions. The Sakas entered Maharashtra from the north through Gujarat. Their invasions occurred over a long period. The Satavahanas might belong to one of the early waves of invaders. Though they ruled from Paithan on the Godavari, their important inscriptions are found in western Maharashtra. The words Maharathi and Maharathini occurring in their writings, it has been conjectured, refer to the Maratha people. The Marathas had settled in Maharashtra long before the Rajputs appeared on the stage of history and established their kingdom.”<sup>1</sup>

#### **COLONIZATION OF THE DECCAN BY ARYANS.**

Taking her cue from Puranic legends Dr. Mrs. Karve suggests a much earlier date for the infiltration of northern or *Aryan* elements in Maharashtra. According to her the colonization of Maharashtra by Aryans speaking Sanskrit or a near related language, occurred in three waves. The legend of the flight of Parasuram after killing the Haihaya king Kartavirya of Mahismati into Aparanta is well-known; this story is interpreted as indicating that Aryan colonization of Aparanta or Kohkan started about 1700 to 1600 B.C., as Parasuram was contemporary of Raja Hariscandra whose reign has been

<sup>1</sup> *Marathi Lokanci Samskriti*, by Dr. Mrs. Iravati Karve (1951), pp. 153-54.

approximately dated about 1700 B.C., by Pargiter. This wave of colonizers entered Aparanta from the north-eastern corner and developed the Konkani language. This part of the country on account of the broken nature of the ground, its hills reaching the sea, its swift flowing rivers, its forests and its consequent lack of communication, remained undeveloped. Konkani remained a spoken dialect without its literature receiving permanent form in writing.

The second wave broke into Vidarbha or modern Berar. The legend of Agasti in the *Puranas* says that the sage crossed the Vindhya and arrived South. This route has been used by later kings for their southern conquests and brought the conquering hordes right into the valley of the Wainganga river. In this region the northern *Aryans* came into conflict with the aborigines. The colonizers by keeping constant contact with the north, refused to merge with the forest-dwelling people. If we are to accept the stories of Lopamudra, Damayanti, Rukmini, Indumati—all princesses of Vidarbha, wedding princes and heroes of the north, Vidarbha appears to be the spear-head of *Aryan* civilization expanding to the south. Pargiter fixes the time of these Vidarbha princesses between 1500 B.C. and 1000 B.C., the period of the great war of Mahabharata. The *Aryan* rule of Vidarbha attained great eminence and the Vakatakas later on continued the tradition.

The main story of Mahabharata centres round the rivalry between cousins. It also contains a sequel about the meeting or conflict of two cultures—the *Aryan* and the Naga. The Mahabharata contains several names of Naga families. Arjuna burnt down the Khandava forest of Taksaka. Taksaka retaliated by destroying Parikshit. His son Janme-jaya to avenge the death of the father, put to death innumerable Naga families. The story is interpreted as a ruthless struggle between the advancing *Aryans*, a pastoral people who cleared the forests for their agriculture and for their cattle and the forest-dwelling tribes who were forced to retire into inaccessible mountains and valleys. The *Baigas*, the *Gonds*, the *Kolis* of Madhya Pradesh claim a kinship with the Nagas which lends support to the thesis of *Aryan*-Naga conflict in the region. Anyhow as ancient literature in Sanskrit or Pali contains no reference to *Dravids*, *Dramils* or *Tamils* contesting the ground with the expanding *Aryans*, it is safe to assume that the people who opposed the *Aryan* advance in Maharashtra were Nagas the ancestors of the hill tribes of the present day.

Khandes' the third region to be colonized by the northern people, known as Asmaka or Mulaka, appears to be an offshoot of Vidarbha. Asmaka had its chief town at Pratisthan; both names appear to be imported from the north. Under the Satavahanas of Pratisthan Asmaka rose in importance, Maharashtra was patronized and helped the rise of Marathi. Before the Satavahanas the country, according to Katha Sarit Sagar of Somadeva, was ruled over by Narasinha. The

popularity of the name of Narasinha or Narasayya in the Deccan, the presence of numerous temples of Narasinha in this region and the frequent reference to Narasinha in folk-tales of the Deccan tribals, bear out Somadeva to a certain extent. Was he the last king, of the Nagas? The words Nag-Narsoba so frequently appearing together in Marathi folk literature, the presence of many townships in Maharashtra such as Nagpur, Nagothana and the popularity of Naga worship in Maharashtra are rather significant.

The Naga people were probably overcome by people coming from the North on horseback. Satavahana or Salivahana means those who used sata or sala as their transport. Sali in Mundari or Naga language may mean a horse. The retreating Nagas felt that the conquering hordes derived their superior strength from the horse and called them Salivahana. For want of more convincing evidence one can only conjecture, that in the course of over a millennium elements from the north arrived in Maharashtra in trickles, mingled with the aborigines and came to form the Maratha people.

Pargiter's chronology cannot be accepted in the light of the latest research on the subject and dates will have to be advanced by almost half a millennium. Basham remarks that the *Aryans* entered India in the Second Millennium B.C. (about 1,500 B.C.). It must have taken quite a few centuries for the *Aryan* tribes to spread to the east and then probe southward. Sir Mortimer Wheeler states the position as under in the latest edition of Oxford History of India. "Although there is no reason to believe that any large Indo-Aryan tribal body ever marched into the peninsula .... the peaceful penetration of the Deccan by Indo-Aryan emissaries began many centuries before the Christian era. Tradition credits the Vedic *Rsi* Agastya or a name sake of his with the introduction of *Aryan* ideas and institutions into the Dravidian South." Prof. Nilakanta Shastri makes a guess that the Aryanization of the South took place about 1,000 B.C.

The above discussion may give us an idea of the early colonization of Maharashtra and of the elements that have gone in the making of the Maratha people. The Deccan plateau has been the meeting ground of the *Aryans* and their successors Yavanas, Sakas, etc., from the north, with the original inhabitants of the land.

How the people came to be called Marathas is a matter of conjecture and the word continues to baffle historians and philologists. The etymology suggested by Molesworth, the first lexicographer of the Marathi language in the 19th Century, that it meant either the great country (Maha Rastra) or the country of the Mahars (Mahar Rastra) has not found acceptance, as the first explanation is obviously the Sanskritized interpretation of later writers and the second has been rejected on the ground that there are no instances of a country being called after a low caste. The present accepted theory is that it is a compound of Maha : great and Rastrika : either a Sanskrit form of Ratta, the name of the northern tribe or a term applied generally to petty Chiefs ruling in the Deccan.



From ancient literary sources it has been surmised that the Ratta. commenced a southward movement from the country of the Kurus north of Indraprastha in Vedic times and entered northern Kohkan by way of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Another body of these Rattas found their way into Vidarbha through Bundelkhand. These bodies were perhaps led by Parasuram and Agasti. In the period of the *Brahmanas*, the Haihaya tribe colonized western and northern parts of Dakshinapatha. The Yadavas likewise moved into Saurashtra and Vidarbha. The Rattas of Aparanta crossed the Sahyadri range and established themselves in the valley of the Bhima, while those in Vidarbha, spread to Asmak (Khandes), south of the Satpuda. In the absence of a strong organized government, the Rattas became all powerful and began to exercise royal authority in their petty principalities. In the time of the Satavahanas (200 B. C. to 200 A. D.), they had become powerful enough to call themselves Maharattas and marry their daughters in the royal family. They were, as is obvious from the Naneghat and Bedsa inscriptions, at that time well-established in central Maharashtra and the Ghatmatha of the Sahyadri range.

After the fall of the Satavahana dynasty Maharashtra was invaded by Indo-Bactrians, Scythians, Abhirs and Malvas. Some of these invaders remained behind and established themselves in separate colonies. Most of them however merged with the people of the country and became Marathas.

The interregnum between the dissolution of the Satavahana power (220 A. D.) and the rise of the Calukyas (500 A. D.) was a period of comparative anarchy when the Marathas entrenched themselves in their villages and districts. Their later career under Calukya, Rastrakuta and other dynasties is too well-known to need reference.

The earliest known mention of Marathas is found in an inscription of about 100 B.C. of the Naneghat leading from the Konkan into the north of the Poona district. The term used here is *Maharatha* granikoviro whidi probably means the hero- leader of Maharathas. In the Bedsa caves in the same locality there is a reference to a queen described as *Maharathini*, dated in the first century A.D. Other similar references are found in the Bhaja and Karla caves. It is not easy to decide whether the terms *Maharatha* and *Maharathini* indicate simply great charioteers or residents of Maharashtra or designate the individuals by their tribal name, the early form of Maratha. Support is lent to the latter interpretation by Rock Edict V of the Mauryan Emperor Asoka of 245 (B.C.) wherein it is recorded that the emperor despatched Buddhist missionaries to Rastikas, Petenikas and Aparantas. It is known that Petenikas refers to Paithan on the Godavari while Aparanta is the old name of northern Konkan.

Rastikas therefore indicates some people resident in the Deccan, possibly the Rattas. It is suggested that the Rattas called themselves Maha Rattas i.e. Maharathas.<sup>1</sup>

The Eran inscription of the 4th Century is perhaps the earliest reference to Maharashtra.<sup>2</sup> A century later was read in Sinhalese chronicle the Mahavansa (A. D. 480) of the country of Maharatha and in A. D. 634, the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang styled the kingdom of the Calukya dynasty of the Deccan Mo-ho-lo-cha which is the Chinese transliteration of Ma-ha-ra-tha. In the middle of the seventh century, an inscription at Aihole near Badami in Bijapur district relates how a king of the Calukya dynasty Pulakesin II gained the sovereignty of the three Maharashtra with their 99,000 villages. About 1020 A.D. the Arab geographer Al Biruni mentions *Marhat des* as a country to the south of the Narmada. Foreign travellers who visited this country from 1,000 A. D. onward always refer to it as the country of the Marathas.

### **SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS.**

Two distinguishing features marked the organization of Maratha society and gave it security and stability—religion of the mass of the population of Maharashtra and the caste system and the village. Hinduism advanced in the south with the march of the Indo-Aryan civilization, but the movement was slow and many of its concepts though accepted superficially, did not obtain the same hold in this region. The Hindu theory that mankind is divided into four *Varnas* or group of castes Brahmin, Ksatriya, Vaisya and Sudra — was foreign to the people of the Deccan Though some castes affected to be of Ksatriya origin, the only distinction in society was between Brahmins, the general mass of the people known as the Marthas and the untouchable Mahars. The forest dwelling tribes like *Bhils*, *Ramosis*, *Kolis*, *Varils* and *Katkaris* were outside the pale of civilized society. They were literally hewers of wood and were not disturbed so long as they confined themselves to the jungle and remained quiescent. Whenever for some reason or other the forest-dwellers raided villages on the border, punitive expeditions were sent against them and they were hunted like wild beasts.

### **Brahmins.**

The Brahmins were a priestly class and enjoyed social privileges. Only a small part, however, engaged in religious duties. They studied the *Sastras*, acted as temple worshippers, and preached the traditional religion to the masses by reading Puranas and by holding religious concourses, popularly known as *Kirtans* and *Bhajans*. At these *Kirtans* would be expounded the philosophy of Hinduism that the world was a mirage and only the *Brahman* was real and the

<sup>1</sup> R. G. Bhandarkar, *Early History of the Deccan* (3rd Ed., 1928), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Discovered by Prof, V. V. Mirashi and published in *Aitihāsik Samkirna Nibandha* of B. I. S. Mandal of Poona, Vol. 5. It says that "Satyanaga Maharashtra raises this pillar to commemorate the memory of the soldiers who died in the field".

realization of the *Brahman* in the self should be the aspiration and endeavour of life. This could be done by study, contemplation, piety, charity and by everybody doing his appointed duty in this life; the exposition was followed by the recitation of a popular story from the *Puranas* — like that of Pralhad or of Bhakta Dhruva — to the accompaniment of music. The object was to drive the moral to the listeners — the triumph of good over evil, of the godly over the ungodly. Many of the temple-worshippers would attach themselves to families in the locality, officiate on occasions like birth, marriage and death, read horoscopes, and perform worship for their patrons on specially holy or auspicious days such as *Ekadasi*, *Sivaratri* etc.

The class which strictly followed the tenets of the Faith and devoted their lives to the study of divine ordinances was held in esteem, but otherwise there was no special veneration for the Brahmin character. Many of them had taken to mundane activities and were working as merchants, bankers and soldiers. But the profession in which they excelled was the clerical one. Because of the illiteracy of the general population the secretarial part of the administration at all levels—village, district and the centre—fell into the hands of the Brahmins who acted as village accountants and district accountants ; they kept records : they were in charge of land measurement and assessment; and they acted as divans to *jagirdars* and ministers and managed their estates. With the establishment of *Svaraj*, the Brahmin clerks and accountants nearest to the king, became ministers of the realm. Sivaji's *Pesva* or chief minister, Moropant Pingle, was a Brahmin ; his finance minister Arnnaji Datto, was a Brahmin. Ramcandra *Amatya* and Naro Sahkar *Saciv* who directed the war of independence against Aurangzeb were Brahmins. Balaji Visvanath who founded the family of the *Pesva* which later usurped royal authority was a Brahmin.

There were several sects of Brahmins in Maharashtra ; the more important were the *Desastha* from Central Maharashtra and *Konka-nastha* or *Citpavan* from Konkan. In the early days of the Maratha state, *Desastha* Brahmins were in greater prominence in administration, but with the rise of Balaji Visvanath *Pesva* they lost their pre-eminent position to the *Citpavanas*.

The Brahmin was thus an important factor in the population. Though the percentage of Brahmins to the general population was barely five, the small minority wielded much greater political power than could be warranted by its strength. The *Pesva*'s court in Poona in its later days came to be known as “ *Brahmani Daulat*” Brahmin-dominated state and roused feelings of jealousy among the masses owing to the favoured position of the Brahmin class.

### **Marathas.**

The next class in importance was the Marathas. The term had a much wider connotation than at present. It included not only

the peasantry, but the shepherds and cowherds. With the exception of a few prominent families they were looked on as Sudras. the fourth class in the society. Col. Tone an officer in the Pesva army writing in 1798, remarks.<sup>1</sup> “the *Maratha* holds a very inferior situation in the scale of rank and eminence of Hindu institutions. He is happily free from observances in respect of washing, praying and eating. He can eat all kinds of food with the exception of beef, can dress his meals at all times and at all seasons, can partake of victuals dressed by any caste superior to his own; washing and praying are not indispensable in his order. These advantages point out the Maratha as eminently qualified for a military life. His paste by which he belongs to the labouring population of the country endures him to fatigue and the vicissitudes of weather.....The *Marathas* are the most numerous of the Hindu people which circumstance promises hopes of success in every military undertaking.”

Col. Tone further adds that the Maratha people were closely knit by a certain primeval plainness operating upon the whole people. There was no distinction of sentiment to be seen : the prince and his domestic thought alike and expressed themselves in the same terms. It was not unusual for a great chief warming himself round a fire or conducting his affairs sitting on a plain saddle cloth surrounded by his subordinates. The simplicity of manners of the *Marathas*, their democratic feeling of equality surprised strangers who had seen servility of conduct of Muslim Courts. The ruler was from a Maratha family; the big confederates Sinde, Bhosle, Gaikvad, the Pavars, were all Marathas. The Maratha peasantry was the dominant element in the Army. Marathas everywhere were *Patils* of villages and *Desmukhs* in districts, or chief landholders. Their total strength was about one-third in the entire population, and besides the Brahmins, they were a powerful element in the population.

### **Vaisyas.**

The next group was made up of artisans and traders, each organised in separate castes. The artisan plied his trade in the village in the traditional way and served its simple needs. The trader was often a *bania* from Gujarat. The carpenter, the smith the copper-smith, the oil-man, the barber, the fisherman were all functional groups and differed little from the—general Maratha community in their religious and social outlook. Each caste had a sort of religious and moral government among itself, conducted by a council of elders. Any breach in the performance of the religious and social rites of the caste brought upon the individual the wrath of the elders. The government in most cases upheld the decision of the elders. In cases of disputes between castes, the matter was referred to the Brahma Sabha of a holy place like Nasik, Paithan or Wai. The general tone of society was conservative and the ruler saw that the traditional way of life was upheld.

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<sup>1</sup> W. Tone in Indian Annual Register. Vol. I, *Illustrations of some Institutions of the Maratha People*.

### Mahars.

The last in the social scale, was the Mahar. In the village community, he was assigned such low jobs as scavenging, clearing away dead animals, keeping watch at night and acting as a messenger and guide to government officials and strangers passing through a village.

Thus, though Maratha society under influence of Brahmanic culture, had adopted many of its concepts, caste distinctions were not sharp and strict as in the north. The great peasant community, despite its low standing in the social scale, held a dominant position and set the general tone of society.

Writing in 1818, Elphinstone reported to Government “The whole population of the Marhatta (Maratha) country are Marahattas (Marathas), and all have some attachment to their nation and feel some interest in its greatness but the common people are devoted to husbandry.”<sup>1</sup>

### VILLAGE COMMUNITIES.

Village communities present the next striking feature of Maratha society of the 18th century. Towns were few and the majority of the people lived in villages. The village was the base on which rested the administrative structure.<sup>2</sup>

A village in the Deccan is called *gav*; when not a market town, it is known as *mauja*; when so, it is known as *kasba*. Every village was a self-contained unit. It was made up of a cluster of huts of the peasants, of the houses of the village officials and of the village temples. All the surrounding land with the exception of inaccessible mountains was attached to it and was divided into fields and the village commons where the cattle grazed. The boundaries of its lands were defined and encroachments were resisted. The arable land was divided into fields, each field had a name which together with the name of the owner, was entered in the register. The inhabitants were principally cultivators and were either *Mirasdars* or *Upri*.<sup>3</sup> “The *Mirasdar* belonged to the village,” held his land in hereditary and could not be dispossessed of it so long as he continued to pay the rent. He could sell and transfer his fields and had the right to sit in the village council. The *Upri* was an outsider, a mere tenant-at-will and cultivated the land so long as his lease continued.

<sup>1</sup> Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIII, p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> Authorities for the following discussion are *Selection of Papers from the Records at the India House*, Vol. IV, especially Elphinstone's report and the reports of Chaplin, Robertson and “other officers; also Poona Gazetteer, (old edition), Vol. II, Chapter 8.

<sup>3</sup> The word is derived from Arabic *miras*, *mirasi*, *mirasdar* and these from *waris* to inherit, *mirasdar* being a holder of hereditary property : *Upri* means a stranger, a mere renter in opposition to hereditary occupant.



Besides the cultivators, there also resided in the village the village officials, *Patil*, *Kulkarni*, *Caugula* and the artisans known as *Bara Baluta*.<sup>1</sup> The most useful and legitimate employment of the artisans was that of labouring for the villagers in the several lines of their drafts, but they also held another position as the village staff and attendants on the *Patil* and assistants in the various social and festive ceremonies of the village.

The *Sutar* or carpenter was at the head of the artisans, his services being most in requisition. He made the villagers' ploughs and repaired their carts, the owners finding the material ; for any other work as building a house or making a cart for other than agricultural purposes, he was paid. The *Lohar* or smith made the hoes of the ploughs and other implements. The *Cambhar* made all leather buckets, halters, whips, ropes and bands for agricultural purposes, the owner finding the leather himself. He also mended the farmer's shoes, though they had to pay him for new ones. He also had to furnish gratuitously the *Desmukh* and the *Despande* of the district and the *Patil* and *Kulkarni* of his village with a new pair of shoes each, annually.

The above three were the principal artisans. They possessed several perquisites above the others, among which was the privilege of sowing in every farmer's field a strip of land with *ralla*, each strip consisting of four furrows. The farmer tilled the land, and the artisans merely brought each his basket of grain which was sown by the farmer and reaped by the recipient when ready.

The *Kumbhar* or potter supplied the village with earthenware— frying pans, ovens, pitchers, water-pots and jars—according to the casualties and needs of each house-hold, receiving a cake of bread on the supply of fresh article. When the crop was ripening he took a jug and water vessels to each field for those engaged in watching the crops, receiving in turn his *nimboor* (or ears of corn). The other artisans, *Mahars* and the village staff generally claimed their pottery free, but the *Kumbhar* stipulated for some service in return. He had also to supply any government servant on his arrival at the village with what vessels he might require. He found the several images at festivals receiving in return a little grain.

The *Nhavi* shaved all the farmers; to the *Mahar* he merely lent a razor. He attended at the *Patil's* wedding. On the occasion of weddings or festivals in the village it was his duty to convey presents from one party to another.

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<sup>1</sup> *Baluta* derived from Bali a share in the grain of the peasant. *Baluta* means yearly allowance of grain for service rendered to the community, The detailed description of the artisans is based on ' *Village Community in the Deccan*', by N. R. Goodine, 'Bombay Govt. Selection.'. (1852).

The *Parit* or washerman washed the clothing of the men-folk of the village. He spread white clothes as carpets for passage-over of a wedding party or of some great personage at a festival.

The *Mahar* was the village watchman, scout and messenger. He was verily the 'village eye.'. His situation made him acquainted with everybody's affairs, and his evidence was required in every dispute. Should two cultivators quarrel respecting the boundaries of their fields, the *Mahar's* evidence often decided it. The *Mahar's* duties were numerous. In large villages they were divided into two or three heads ; these were *veskars* or porters at the village gates; the *Khale-veskars* or guards of the stack-yards, the *gaon-veskars* or *Mahars* appointed to attend at the *cavdi* and the *gaon-mahars* or those for general duty of the village. Different *Mahar* families performed these duties in rotation. In small villages one family guarded the gates, kept an account of persons who came and went, attended to travellers, conveyed government letters and cash. During harvest time he guarded the stack-yard and kept a fire burning at night and made himself generally useful. His remuneration was a government *inam*, a tithe upon everything grown; presents of bread and other victuals; small imposts of oil, sugar and condiments begged from shopkeepers.

The *Mang* provided the villagers with ropes and prepared the hides for the *Cambhar* to work, the *Gurav* looked after the local temples, a *Mulana* took care of the mosque and tombs; a bard and astrologer were the other concomitants of larger villages.

The fees in kind to the artisans depended very much on the state, of the crops and also upon the extent of services performed. Col. Jervis who made inquiries about the percentage of the share the *Balutedars* claimed from the peasants, was informed that it was as high as twenty-five, which he did not believe. Other sources reveal it as about ten per cent. But there is no doubt that the arrangement added to the burden of the peasantry.

The *Patil* was the first among the cultivators and the chief village officer, the *Caugula* was his immediate assistant and both were Maratha by caste. The office descended from father to son; when there was no capable person to perform the duties, a near relation was chosen. A succession always required confirmation from government and vacancies caused by disappearance or desertion, were filled by government nomination. The *Patil* held rent-free lands and had several perquisites. His position as a government dignitary and the social predominance and various financial advantages he enjoyed gave him a prestige in the community and the dignity of the post was much valued.

The person next to the *Patil* was the *Kulkarni*, the clerk or registrar who kept the records in respect of the fields, kept the rental accounts and acted as a general writer for the inhabitants. Being perhaps the only literate person, he wielded far greater influence than was warranted by his position. He had rent-free lands and other perquisites only inferior to that of the *Patil*. He was mostly a Brahmin, some times a *Kayastha* Prabhu.

The *Caugula* and the *Mahar* made up the village establishment. The *Mahar* was useful as a village watchman and attended to strangers. His duties have been already enumerated.

The *Patil's* principal duty was to supervise cultivation and collect government assessment. As the latter depended on the state of the crops, the *Patil* had to use all the skill and persuasion he was capable of, to make the *ryots* work harder and better. He induced them to bring as much land under the plough as they could, attracted tenants to take up fallow land, fixed the rent they had to pay, arranged advances for agricultural operations and helped government agents to make correct assessment and realize the rent from the *ryots*.

He was also in charge of peace and order. Trifling offences he punished himself, redressed wrongs, and intervened to settle the villagers' disputes. The village *Cavdi* was the place where people with grievances came and related them to him. The *Patil* knew everybody well, and could immediately sense what was wrong and tried to set things right with admonitions to the offender. When disputes took a serious turn and could not be settled by this informal method, he induced the parties to compromise the matter, but if necessary, he called some of the inhabitants best acquainted with the dispute and submitted the case for arbitration. This was called a *Pancayat*. Crime of a trifling nature was attended to by the *Patil* but serious offences were reported to the district officer.

In addition to his revenue and magisterial duties, the *Patil* was responsible for the defence of the village. He sent for the villagers to sleep at the village *cavdi* and keep watch at the gate when disturbances were reported in the surrounding country. Funds needed to strengthen the village-wall or repair the temples and wells were collected with the help of the village elders and spent under his direction. He was responsible for entertaining government dignitaries, *Sibandi*, holy men and *Sanyasis* passing through the village. He also sometimes provided the villagers with amusement and recreation by inviting jugglers and tumblers to perform.

For all practical purposes the village managed its affairs, and followed the even tenor of its life almost forgotten by the world out-side and undisturbed by upheavals beyond the narrow range of its

interests. Elphinstone thought that “these village communities were an excellent remedy for the defects of a bad government as they saved the people from negligence and served as a sort of barrier against its tyranny and rapacity.”<sup>1</sup>

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE.**

The Maratha administration as it developed in the 18th century was a compound of elements borrowed from ancient works on Hindu polity, elements taken over from the Muslim States of the Deccan and modified by the genius of the founder of the Maratha State to suit its special needs and changes that took place when the guiding hand of that great architect was removed. The administrative structure in mediaeval times was a simple one, government activities centering round defence from foreign enemies and security from turbulent elements at home. Defence calls for an efficient army which for its proper functioning needs unity of command. The leader of the hosts who can successfully beat back the enemies, naturally comes to occupy the first place in the State. He becomes the King. For internal security the monarch looked to the support of the aristocracy. This privileged order at the centre formed the King's court and advised him on the conduct of administration. Outside the capital members from the class managed districts on his behalf.

#### **Central Executive.**

Thus in Maratha polity we find political power resting in the highest executive, the crowned prince. Shivaji directed all the activities of his state and ruled as well as reigned. As his field of activity grew wider, he appointed advisers to assist him—a minister who would look after collection of revenues and audit accounts, another to take charge of relations with neighbouring powers, a third to look after defence, a fourth to look to the records, a fifth to administer justice, a sixth to take charge of ecclesiastical matters and so on. Though the *Raja* received advice from the ministers and often accepted their suggestions, the responsibility for formulating policy, unlike that of the British Cabinet, was his ; his ministers were his secretaries—his subordinates who carried out his orders. It is wrong to compare the *Asta Pradhan Mandal* or the Cabinet of eight Ministers of Shivaji with that of the English Cabinet. The English Cabinet is free in the choice of its decision, While the ministers have a free-hand in the routine administration, the general directive comes from the Prime Minister. The sovereign reigns but does not rule. In Shivaji's Council, no minister possessed over-riding authority. This was left in the Land of the sovereign himself.

Shivaji's successors did not possess his tireless energy and came to rely more and more on their councillors. Sambhaji (1680-1689) resigned his authority to his minister Kalasa, while in the fugitive

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<sup>1</sup> *Selection of East India Papers*, Vol. IV, p. 158.

Rajaram's time (1689-1700), the exigency of the situation required that the King should give a free hand to his advisers. In his absence in the south, Ramcandra *Amatya* and *Sankaraji Saciv*, directed Maratha activities on their own initiative. Even at Jinji, Rajaram resigned himself to the advice of another minister, the *Pratindhi*. These ministers lacking the prestige of the King's position, were obliged to purchase the loyalty of their adherents by making appeals to their self-interest, by holding out promises of large rewards, in the shape of fiefs or *Jagirs*, with which the Maratha was already familiar and which the Moghal emperor was bestowing on renegades. Sivaji always insisted on regular payment from his treasury to his officers. But during the protracted war with Aurangzeb, little treasure could be found with which to pay the chiefs and their men. It was found necessary to assign them territories and ask them to fend for themselves.

### **Feudalization.**

In the interregnum from Sambhaji's capture to the home-coming of Sahu in May 1707, conditions in Maharashtra were abnormal. The machinery of government as devised by Sivaji broke down. A number of Maratha captains raised Torces on their own, led expeditions in Moghal provinces and made collection of revenues from which they reimbursed themselves. Sahu when he returned home with a handful of body-guards, was called upon to establish his superior claims against local Moghal officers and the protege of his aunt Tara Bai and set up his authority over the warlords. At first the patriotic tradition of his grand-father, the bitter memory of the sufferings of his father and the support of Zulfiqar Khan, enabled him to hold his own against his rivals. But this initial advantage needed to be buttressed by the personal valour and leadership in a country bristling with arms. Sahu lacked the commanding talents and energy of his grand-father and the patriotic tradition could not help him long ; he was scarcely able to hold his own against the party of his aunt, when the support of Zulfiqar Khan was gone. Balaji Visvanath who became *Pesva* in 1713, in face of mounting difficulties came to realize that it was no longer possible to adhere to Sivaji's old constitution under which the King, aided by his eight ministers, was the sole ruler of his dominions. The King's position as against the warlords who had made themselves practically independent in several parts of the Deccan, had deteriorated. The only way to save the kingship being submerged and the country being involved in civil war and turmoil, was to accept the chiefs as vassals, with practically free reins in their territory, to acknowledge them as hereditary *Jagirdars* who would bring their armies to the common standard when called upon, but otherwise, would have a free hand in the management of their fiefs. Sahu accepted the advice of his minister, concluded an agreement with Angre on these lines, and gave similar freedom of action to other chiefs. A revolution in feudalizing the Maratha State began.



Sahu's stay-at-home policy accelerated the process of feudalization, and the want of capacity in his successors completed it. The chiefs who raised men and money for distant expeditions on their own, could not be expected to be subservient to royal commands and render minute accounts to court officers, when the sovereign himself gave no directive and showed little interest in distant operations. The *Pesva* or Chief-Minister who could have saved royal authority from falling into disuse, himself became the leading feudal chief and kept his conquests on the west-coast and in Hindustan to himself. The example set by the *Pesva* was copied by other ministers and chiefs. The *Pratinidhi*, *Saciv Senapati* and other cabinet members though they retained their nominal rank, became transformed into hereditary, feudatories and the new warlords that had sprung during the war with Aurangzeb, swelled their ranks.

The old members of the cabinet looked on the *Pesva* as an usurper and withheld co-operation in his schemes of conquest. The *Pesva* had to look to able assistants to uphold his authority in distant quarters. These assistants, Sinde, Holkar, Pavar, Jadhav and others in course of time, became transformed into feudal chiefs. The spirit of feudalization came to stay and invaded Maratha administration in all its branches. Even small civil and military posts came to be endowed with *Jagirs* and alienated revenues.<sup>1</sup>

The feudal organization lacks coherence, suffers from want of unity of command and can never pull its full weight in a crisis. As the sovereign does not deal direct with his subjects, his hold on their allegiance is nominal. The subjects readily follow the immediate chiefs with whom their lives and welfare are tied than the legendary monarch on whom they rarely set their eyes. The freedom the subordinate chiefs enjoy in the management of their *Jagirs*, breeds a spirit of defiance, they affect independence and resent interference from central authority. Should this authority pass into weak hands, the centrifugal tendencies become accelerated and the structure collapses. The Maratha State could not escape this fate of feudal Governments. Its atomisation sapped the foundations and it could not stand the attack of the, organized power of the British at the end of the century.

Malcolm's comments are worth repetition. He says, The constitution of the government and army of the Marhattas (Marathas) was more calculated to destroy than to create an empire. The fabric had no foundation. The chiefs were from the first, almost equal; and as the armies they led, depended principally on success

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<sup>1</sup> According to Elphinstone's calculation out of the total revenue of the *Pesva* of Rs. 2,15,00,000, more than half was in the possession of *Jagirdars*. This does not take account of the *Jagirs* of the bigger chiefs like Sinde, Holkar, Bhosle and Gaikvad. See *Poona Residency Correspondence Service*, Vol. XIII, p. 396.

for pay, the leaders were necessarily invested with powers for the collection of tribute, or revenues, from the provinces into which they were sent. But though a share was claimed by Government, the application of the greater part in the payment of his troops and other expenses, raised the successful general into a ruler of the countries he had conquered. This everywhere produced the same effects, and the public interest was lost sight of in the desire of individuals to prompt their own ambition. The early example of the *Paishwah's (Pesva)* usurpation was followed almost by all to whom opportunity offered; and this was aided by the form of their village governments having been carried into the state; every office, from that of *Paishwah (Pesva)*, or prime minister, to the lowest employ became hereditary. This practice, by giving rights, limited patronage and weakened the heads of the empire, among whom divisions early arose. Notwithstanding the military reputation which some of the *Paishwahs (Pesva)* added to their other pretensions to supreme authority, all that superior intelligence which their habits and education gave them, was unequal to keep in check the ambition of enterprising chiefs who, intoxicated with success, soon forgot their obligations to the Brahmin princes by whom they were elevated to command. One part of the policy of the *Paishwahs (Pesva)* tended greatly to accelerate the independence of those leaders—the fear of their disturbing the peace of their native country, or consuming, its resources, led to their constant employment in foreign expeditions, where they were subject to little or no control; and to attain the object of keeping a successful general and his adherents at a distance, the superior was satisfied with nominal allegiance”.<sup>1</sup>

### Rise of the *Pesvas*.

For quite some time the revolution was not apparent. The King's authority was bolstered up by his very able *Pesvas* Balaji Visvanath, Baji Rav I and his son Balaji. The *Pesvas*, with other ministers, attended the *Raja's court* and when absent on campaigns were represented by their deputies. The king was kept informed of happenings outside and was formally consulted on all matters of importance. But as the Maratha state expanded the *Pesvas* showed themselves great leaders of men and far out-stripped other ministers. It was *Pesva* Balaji Visvanath who obtained for his sovereign the *sanad* of *Svaraj. Cauth and Sardes mukhi* and thus legitimized *Raja* Sahu's position. Then again it was Balaji's son Baji Rav who defeated the great *Nizam* when the latter challenged the *Raja's* authority in 1727. The *Senapati* who had started intrigues both against the *Raja* and the *Pesva* was destroyed in 1731. The neighbouring powers on the west coast were reduced by the *Pesva's* exertions, who also tore away Malva and Bundelkhand from the imperial grip. No wonder that the grateful Sovereign came to rely more and more on the *Pesva* than on other ministers who chose the ease of the capital and kept at home, contenting themselves with giving advice. The result was that the *Pesva* who originally was one of the eight ministers, came to occupy the first position in the king's council.

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm, John, *A Memoir of Central India*, Vol. I (1880, ed.), pp. 60-62.

This was confirmed by *Raja* Sahu himself. On his death-bed he wrote two wills or rescripts. The first says “We order that you should command the forces. The Government of the empire must be carried on. You are to take measures to preserve the kingdom. Our successors will not interfere with your post.”<sup>1</sup> The other paper was a solemn injunction to the *Rajas* successors to maintain the *Pesva* in power.

Armed with these documents, the *Pesva* called a meeting of the council and declared that he would also administer the kingdom on behalf of the dead *Rajas* successor. The successor being an inexperienced youth brought up in humble circumstances, was in no position to oppose the *Pesva*, and gave his written sanction that the *Pesva*’s authority should be obeyed. The *Pratinidhi*, Raghuji Bhosle, and others who showed themselves recalcitrant, were overawed. Thus, from 1750 the supreme authority in the Maratha Government came to be exercised by the Brahmin *Pesva* in the name of the Maratha Sovereign, who became a shadowy figure, a mere cipher. Though he continued to be publicly honoured and issue ceremonial dresses he had no authority in the conduct of administration and even his household expenses came to be controlled by the Vice-Regent.<sup>2</sup>

The usurpation of the *Pesvas*, Scott Waring justly remarks “neither attracted observation nor excited surprise. Indeed, the transition was easy, natural and progressive”. Its greatest disadvantage according to Rawlinson, was that “it aggravated the centrifugal tendencies of the Maratha State, especially the enmity between the Brahman and Maratha, which were at least kept in check while a member of the house of Bhosle actually ruled; after the *Pesva*’s prestige was shaken by the defeat of Panipat, the disintegration became more and more evident.”<sup>3</sup>

The rise of the *Pesva* not only emphasised the feudalizing process, but also marked the triumph of orthodoxy. The Maratha state was born on the crest of a movement of social and religious reform which had attacked the sacerdotal authority of the Brahmin and laid stress on social equality. Under its impetus all castes and classes had participated in the work of liberation. Sivaji in his administration emphasised merit and talent wherever he found them. His army consisted of local Maratha peasantry, while Brahmins, Prabhus and Sarasvats manned his civil establishment. As the *Pesvas* rose in importance the complexion of the services slowly began to change. From the time of Balaji Rav (1740-61) his castemen found favour in clerical as well as military services. The Maratha administration became Brahmanical and “the Principal offices of government were” according to Malet either in the possession of Brahmins

<sup>1</sup> Kincaid and Parasnis, *A History of the Maratha People*, p. 455.

<sup>2</sup> *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. XIII, p. 29; Elphinstone here records his view on the *Pesva*’s position.

<sup>3</sup> *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 412.

or so disposed as to be under their control.”<sup>1</sup> Other communities felt neglected by the monopolization of power by Brahmins, and made them apathetic to the fortunes of the State.

Justice Ranade makes significant observations on this subject. He remarks<sup>2</sup>, “One other general feature, which distinguishes the first period under Sivaji and Sahu from the period which followed the establishment of *Pesva*’s power at *Poona*, relates to the fact that while most of the great military commanders in the earlier period were Marhattas (Marathas) with the notable exception of the *Pesvas* themselves, the men who rose to the distinction in the latter half of the century were for the most part, Brahmins..... This infusion of the racial and caste element among the military leaders of the nation had disastrous effects. There were parties within parties, with little chance of a common and active sympathy throughout all the classes, who had been held together with such successful results by Sivaji, Rajaram and Sahu. The first half of the century, was singularly free from these racial and caste jealousies. In the latter half, they had attained such prominence that concert was impossible, and each great leader naturally cared to pursue his own interest to the sacrifice of the common weal. The Brahmins at this time came to regard themselves as a governing caste with special privileges and exemptions, which were unknown under the system founded by Sivaji, ..... All these distinguishing features of purely sacerdotal or caste ascendancy characterised the close of the century, and introduced a demoralisation of which few people have any correct idea. The State ceased to be the ideal protector of all classes, and upholder of equal justice. Ramdasa’s high ideal of the religion of Maharashtra was lowered down to one in keeping with the belief that the State had no higher function than to protect the cow and the Brahmin, and the usual consequences followed such a decadence of virtue.

### **Secretariat.**

The secretariat known as *Huzur Daftar* was a big establishment consisting of about 200 clerks headed by the *Phadnis* or Chief Secretary. This establishment was in charge of all sorts of accounts. It received and checked accounts of districts and other subordinate offices and drew up estimates and authorized budgets for the ensuing year. Accounts of all alienations of public revenues, whether *Saranjams*, *Inams* or otherwise, of the pay, rights and privileges of the Government and village officers, accounts of the strength and pay of troops and expenses of all civil, military and religious establishments were all submitted to the Secretariate. There were daily registers, abstracts of registers, estimates of revenue and expenditure, abstracts of actual receipts and expense, and based on them, were the authorized budgets for districts. The whole of this were consolidated and exhibited in a comprehensive view in “*Tarjamas*”.

<sup>1</sup> *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 342.

<sup>2</sup> M. G. Ranade, *Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol, I (ed. by D. C. Wacha),



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### District Administration.

It was really through the district administration that the impact of government was carried to the people at large. Each revenue division called indiscriminately as *pargana* or *prant* was under an officer who, in a large district, was known as *Mamlatdar*, and in a small one *Kamavisdar*. The appointment was for a year but cases were not uncommon when the same *Mamlatdar* continued to hold the charge for twenty-five or even thirty years. In the prosperous days of the *Pesvas*, the *Mamlatdars* were men of honesty and integrity and managed their charge with ability. The *Mamlatdar* had under him inferior agents for smaller units known as *Tarafars*, *Karkuns*, *Saikdars* whom he nominated himself. His district establishment consisted of eight members, *Divan*, *Mazumdar*, *Phadnavis*, *Potnis*, *Potedar*, *Citnis*, *Karkhanis* and *Sabhasad* — hereditary officers who were directly responsible to government, whose signatures were necessary to all documents and who were bound to give information of all the misdeeds and malpractices of the *Mamlatdar*. The *Mamlatdars* salary was calculated at one per cent. on the revenue of his charge and varied from five to six thousand rupees a year.

The district officer was responsible for every branch of administration, civil and criminal justice, the control of militia and the police, the investigation of social and religious questions, agriculture, and trade. As revenue collector he fixed the assessment of each village in consultation with the *Patils*, collected the revenue, heard and decided complaints against village officers. In his judicial capacity he supervised the administration of justice by giving effect to decisions of *Pancayats* or ordering fresh inquiry in case of appeal, apprehending criminals, putting down gang robberies and petty risings. He was also responsible for the general welfare of the district and was expected to attend to popular needs.

In remote provinces such as Khandes, Gujarat or Karnatak there was an officer between the *Mamlatdar* and the Government who was called the *Sarsubhedar*. Like the *Mamlatdar* he was responsible for revenue as well as general administration. Both of them were helped in their work by *Sibandi* or irregular foot soldiers and a party of horse.

### Village Administration.

The base of the administrative structure was the village community which has already been described. In the absence of a developed central government village communities throughout the centuries had been left to manage their affairs. Maratha rulers were no innovators and abstained from disturbing the villages in their internal management. The changes that Sivaji effected were in the system of cash payment and direct revenue management. Sivaji perceived that much of the disorder in old times arose as a result of entrusting the collection of revenues to *Zamindars* of districts and villages. They collected more from *ryots* and paid less to government, and used their resources and situation to create disturbances and resist the authority of government. Sivaji dispensed with the *Zamindar* class and appointed paid men as *Kamavisdars*.



and *Subhedars* to collect land-revenue direct from the *royts*. These revenue officers surveyed fields, visited villages and entered into agreements with the *Patils* about the revenue each village was expected to pay. This beneficial change was continued till almost the end of the Maratha State. It was in the days of the last *Pesva* that the farming system was revived with disastrous effect on village communities.

#### **PUBLIC FINANCE.**

The chief source of public revenue was land and the ruler had to use all his ingenuity to obtain maximum return without drying up the source. In ancient times Hindu rulers demanded one-sixth of the actual produce which demand was raised in emergencies such as war, coronation, marriage in the royal family, etc. Collections of revenue in kind was possible when kingdoms were small. By the 17th century however the demand had been commuted into money payment, though payment in kind continued in hilly regions and as a means of provisioning forts. Land was measured and assessment related to the quality and the produce of the soil by Akbar's minister, *Raja Todar Mal*. *Todar Mal's* methods were copied in the Deccan by the Nizamsahi minister, *Malik Ambar* (1605-1626 A. D.). His settlement was based on a correct knowledge of the area of the land tilled and of the money value of the crop and the determination to limit the state demand to a small share of the actual value of the crop. He converted his grain demand into fixed cash rates. These conversion rates did not vary with the fluctuations in the price of grain and from their extreme lowness when they were fixed, were very favourable to the *ryot*. Under *Malik Ambar's* system arable land was divided into equal areas or *bighas* and the demand on these areas varied according to the quality of the soil. After this had been determined, arable land was divided into *Khalsa* or land which yielded revenue to government and *inamat* or land whose government rental had been alienated through favour or in return for service. After deducting *inamat* land, the *Khalsa* land was entered as containing so much *Bagayat* or garden land and so much *Jirayat* or dry land. *Malik Ambar* is supposed to have fixed the share at less than one-third which had been the usual exaction before his time. The records showed the details of rent-alienated land. Those owned by *Vatandars* were known as *Dumala* or two-owned *inams*, while those granted to temples and mosques and village servants were wholly *inams*. The details of rent-alienated land were followed by details of revenue-paying land and of the various cesses levied on the craftsmen, the shop-keepers and village-servants or *balutas*.

Under the system, though the amount of cesses varied, the bulk of the demand on each village remained constant. There was no reference to waste land and once the rental was fixed, the management of the village was left entirely to the *Patil* with orders that he

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed study of the topics, see *Baden Powell, Land-system of India*, three volumes, *East India Papers*, Vol. IV, esp., the reports of *Elphinstone*, *Chaplin* and *Roberston*.

was responsible for collecting the amount. The *Patil* thus became the representative of the village with wide powers to exploit waste lands. The holder of the land was likewise responsible to pay his share of the rental to which his land was liable whether he tilled it or not.

It is said that Malik Ambar's demand on a *bigha* (4/5 of an acre) came to about 5 annas, which according to prices in 1820, amounted to Rs. 1¾ to Rs. 2. The low rates fixed by Malik Ambar greatly enriched the country. The *Patils* let out waste lands on favourable terms and thus encouraged cultivation and the country which had been depopulated before, began to show signs of prosperity. Malik Ambar's settlement is known as *Tankha*.<sup>1</sup>

Sivaji in his *jagir*, succeeded to the Nizam Sahi rule and continued the *Tankha* assessment. The rates were those that obtained before, government taking one-third and leaving two-third to the producer. The settlement was *mauzevar*, based on the actual state of the crop, the village making good a lump sum. Malik Ambar's survey however, had not been very careful. Sivaji introduced a standard measure of a *Kathi* or measuring rod. The *Kathi* was to be five cubits and five fists in length.<sup>2</sup> Twenty rods square made a *bigha* and one hundred twenty *bighas* made a *chahur*. The unit of measurement being fixed a fresh survey settlement was ordered, and the work was entrusted to Annaji Datto.

Annaji Datto fixed the rent at 33 per cent. of the gross produce, but Sivaji afterwards demanded a consolidated rent of 40 per cent when all the extra taxes and cesses were abolished.<sup>3</sup>

The rates introduced by Sivaji were revised by his successors. As the 18th century advanced, there was an increased abundance of money, partly caused by the continuous working of American mines, and partly because money was flowing into Maharashtra as Maratha power expanded and tributes were levied on surrounding states. The effect was a fall in the value of money and consequent reduction in government share of the produce of the land. To make good this loss, fresh cesses were levied from time to time. Ultimately to do away with the irregularities and uncertainties *Pesva* Balaji Rav (1740-1761) ordered a new survey and settlement. Lands were measured, classified according to the nature of the soil and the produce they grew, and new rates were levied. For irrigated and garden lands growing sugar-cane and opium they charged rates varying from Rs. 5 to Rs. 6—8 and Rs. 10 per *bigha*, dry crops were assessed at Re. 1 to Rs. 1—8, per *bigha*.

<sup>1</sup> According to Baden-Powell, the name *Tankha* is derived from the silver coin which was used in lieu of the old copper '*takka*', but the term has become synonymous with a fixed assessment in the lump on a village. Vol. III, p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> The *Kathi*, Chaplin says, was about nine feet in length.

<sup>3</sup> Outline of Sivaji's system is given in *Sabhasad Bakhar*, pp. 28-29.

The *Pesva's* assessment came to be known as *Kamal* standard or the highest possible. This was twice as high as Malik Ambar's settlement, but there was a difference. In levying the village rental the area actually under tillage and not the whole arable area was taken into consideration.

The social framework of an agrarian economy and the production, and distribution of wealth are conditioned by land tenures. According to ancient Hindi concepts the individual who cleared unclaimed land and brought it under the plough, became the proprietor paying part of the produce for the protection he enjoyed from the state. The *Mirasi* tenure of the Deccan is the normal outcome of this concept. It was Malik Ambar who gave a firm and definite shape to this idea by making land private property of the cultivator, attaching to the proprietary right the power of sale and granting other lands as the joint property of the village, community.

In the Maratha country under *the Pesva's* Government, there had developed two well-defined tenures : *Mirasi* and *Upri*. The *Mirasi* tenure was undoubtedly that of the highest order. The holding descended from father to son, according to the law of inheritance, that of equal partition among the male heirs; the holder's position could not be disturbed except for non-payment of government demand in respect of land, which was fixed and not subject to enhancement. Should the *Mirasdar* at any time abandon his lands, he or his heirs were entitled after any lapse of time to reclaim them and this right was not barred by any statute of limitations. The land was saleable and could not be seized for debts. Even if the *Mirasdar* failed to pay his assessment, the most government could do was to put pressure on him and his brother *mirasdars*. The tenure gave the holder a right to sit in the village council. Although there is some doubt about the point, the general opinion is that the *mirasdar* was liable for the rent of so much of his land which he actually cultivated being exempt from any payment in respect of the uncultivated portion.

Elphinstone who made particular inquiries about tenures in Maharashtra reported "that a large portion of the *ryots* were the proprietors of their estates, subject to the payment of a fixed land-tax to government; that their property was hereditary and saleable, that they were never dispossessed when they paid their tax, and that they had for a long period the right to reclaim their estates on paying government dues..... All the land which did not belong to the *Mirasdar* belonged to government or those to whom government assigned it. The property of the *Zamindars* in the soil had not been introduced or even heard of, in the Maratha country."

The *Upri* was a tenant-at-will of the government, having no rights except that of temporary cultivation, as provided for by the term of his agreement. He took up from year to year as much land as he

wanted to cultivate and paid assessment proportionate only to the crop which he obtained. His assessment was liable to enhancement.

The *Gat-kul* (owner disappeared), *Kauli* (taken on lease) and *Khasbandi* were other tenures which were but variations of the *Mirasi* and *Upri* and need not detain us.

The position of the *Mirasdar* looked, in theory, very strong. His lands had been measured out and classified, and the standard demand on them had been fixed. If, however, the rains failed, if the village suffered from war or pestilence or if a family calamity intervened, he could always seek remission. Complaints against over assessment, he could take to the *Huzur*.

All the advantages of the position of the *Mirasdars* arising out of a fixed standard rent for his fields were however rendered ungainful by the practice of the levy of extra cesses. Extra cesses were levied in the name of village expenses, presents in kind to village officers (*ganv khare*, *sadli-varid*) Old hereditary district officers (*Desmukh* and *Despande*), though defunct, demanded their perquisites in kind ; district officers, their clerks, their peons and even the distant courtiers struggled to batten on the labour of *ryot*.

#### Other Taxes.

Elphinstone mentions some of the cesses in his report. “ *Miras Patti*, an additional tax levied once in three years on *Mirasdars*, *Mhar* (*Mahar*) *Mharkee*, a tax on the *enams* (*inams*) of the *Mahars*; *Inam Tijayee*, payment by *inamdars* of a third of the revenue from their *inam* lands ; *Vihir Hunda*, an extra tax on lands watered from wells ; *Ghar Patti*, house-tax levied from all but Brahmin village officers; *Danka*, tax for the right to beat a drum on particular religious and other occasions; *Kharidi Jinnas* (Purveyance), the right to purchase articles at a certain rate generally commuted for money payment; *Lagan Takka*, a tax on marriage; *Pat Dam*, tax on the remarriage of widows; *Mhais Pattee*, tax on buffaloes; *Bakra Pattee*, a tax on sheep. There were also occasional contributions in kind called *Fad Farmais* such as bullock’s hide, charcoal, hemp, rope, ghee, *tup*, *tel*, curds, fowl, etc., which were often commuted for fixed money payment. Other taxes were on traders alone. These were *Mohtarfa*, a tax on shop-keepers in the village; *Balutee*, a tax on the twelve village servants; *Bazar Baithak*, a tax on stalls at fairs; *Kumbhar Khan*, a tax on earth dug up by the potters. Ultimately they were paid by the peasants for whom the traders and artisans plied”.

Besides all this and the *ganv kharc*, there were taxes to defray the district expenses not provided for by government, in which were included many personal expenses of the *Mamlatdars* and a large fund known as *Darbar Kharc* or *Antastha*, which was a sort of bribe to the district officer, his staff and the court officials, which had official recognition.

“In addition to all these exactions, there were occasional impositions on extraordinary emergencies, which were called *Jasti Pattee* and *Yek Sali Pattee*. If these happened to be continued for several years, they ceased to be considered as occasional impositions and fell into regular *Sevai Jama*. Until the introduction of the farming system these were however rare.”

The independent spirit of the Maratha peasantry and a succession of mild rulers and good administrators saved the country from rack renting, but the inherent weakness came out when *Pesva Baji Rav II* came to power, sold districts to the highest bidders and let loose on the country a swarm of rapacious harpies.

### **Other Sources of Revenue.**

The other sources of public revenues were, (1) *Zakat*, (2) Forest, (3) Mint and (4) Courts of Law.

*Zakat or Inland Customs* :—When goods passed from one district to another they were subjected to transit duties which were computed on the basis of bullock-loads. Rates varied in proportion to the value of the article, the highest being eight rupees. As duty was levied separately in each district much inconvenience resulted owing to frequent stoppage and search of property at custom-posts. To remedy this, *Hundekaries* undertook to carry goods over long distances by arranging to pay custom officers in lump sum. *Zakat*, was always farmed out. According to Ephinstone, *Zakat* before the cession of Poona, produced about five lakhs of rupees.

Another source of revenue was the *mint*. Coining in *Pesva's* time was done both by government, as well as by private agency. The goldsmith paid a royalty for the right of minting money and was expected to maintain purity of coinage. Breach of this was met with fine and forfeiture. Several coins minted at different places were in circulation. Copper coins were in common use. but silver rupees and gold Mohurs were also in circulation .

*Abkari* did not yield more than Rs. 10,000 the use of spirituous liquor being forbidden at Poona and discouraged everywhere. The result was sobriety among the general mass of the populace, though Maratha chiefs like Daulat Rav Sinde, Tukoji Holkar and Bhosles were known for their inebriating habits.

Forests were not a very great source of income. For cutting wood for building and fuel purposes, a licence fee was levied which was about four annas per bullock-load. For works of public utility, building materials were sometimes given free. *Kurans* and pasture lands brought in a modest sum.

Fines from losers in a suit and fees from winners were also added to the revenues from the districts.



*Mulkgiri*<sup>1</sup>.—Another source of considerable yet uncertain revenue was *Mulkgiri-tribute* levied on neighbouring States. Year after year Maratha armies would move out of their homeland to collect tribute-*cauth* as they called it. In the early days of the Maratha State, *Mulkgiri* was no doubt a necessity. The State was surrounded by enemies and only a powerful army could hold them at bay. Where else could the ruler find sustenance for his armies, if not in enemy territory? Sivaji's expeditions in Khandes, Aurangabad, Gujarat, Karnatak and the subsequent moves of Maratha armies in Malva and Bundelkhand, originated in the exigencies of the State.

The exigency was followed as a matter of policy by later rulers. Maratha armies spread all over India demanding *cauth* from Rajas of Rajputana and Bundelkhand, *Navabs* of the Deccan, Gujarat, Oudh and Bengal, and the *polygars* of Karnatak. "When the Marathas proceeded beyond their boundaries, to collect revenue and make war were synonymous", says Grant Duff. "Whenever a village resisted, its officers were seized and compelled by threats and sometimes by torture, to come to a settlement. Ready money was seldom obtained, but securities from bankers, which later were exchanged for bills payable in any part of India." It was a principle of Maratha commanders to increase the amount of their exactions whenever possible, but in no case to recede from the demands of their predecessors.

This levy of *cauth* has been defended as a measure adopted by the Maratha State for the protection of its own subjects against foreign aggression and as a means of preparing ground for the establishment of its complete sovereignty. A powerful state requires no protection against weak neighbours; in fact these neighbours look to the suzerain authority for defence against external and internal enemies. The Maratha policy of nibbling at the sources of the neighbouring states brought them little strength. Very little of the *cauth* reached the central treasury, it was swallowed by the armies and their officer. But the odium it brought on the Maratha name was to prove disastrous to Maratha cause. The policy of *Mulkgiri* found the Marathas friendless and isolated when they faced the Abdali at Panipat. The amount the foreign tribute brought was so uncertain that no attempt has so far been made to estimate its yield.

Though one may not wholly agree with Munro's verdict that "the Mahratta (Maratha) government from its foundation has been one of the most destructive that ever existed in India,"<sup>2</sup> one cannot but conclude that the debit side of *Mulkgiri* weighs heavily against the credit side. For want of consolidation Maratha conquests proved ephemeral; the tributaries raised their heads the moment the tide

<sup>1</sup> See Jadunath Sarkar, *Sivaji and his Times*, (5th ed.), p. 373. Forbes, *Rasmala*, Vol. I, p. 234, Vol. II, pp. 53-55, 119. Grant Duff's *History of the Marathas*, Vol. I, p. 464.

<sup>2</sup> Gleig, *Life of Sir Thomas Munro*, Vol. II, p. 14.

of invasion receded. "The sympathy which the religious aspect of the State might have drawn from Hindus was dissipated by the aspect of plunder which was applied as ruthlessly to Hindus as to Muslims. The peaceful Bengali and the martial Rajput were equally subjected to it and equally welcomed deliverance from Maratha hands."

### **Total Income of Maratha State and *Pesva's* Debts.**

The total income of the Maratha State has been a matter of speculation. It is always difficult to reckon the income and expenditure of a State the boundaries of which were shifting from day-to-day. In the absence of a close study of the *Pesva* archives we have to depend on statements made by British administrators and writers. Elphinstone at the time of taking over the *Pesva's* territories (1818) reported to the Governor-General that "the *Pesva's* whole revenue before the last treaty amounted to Rs. 2,15,00,000 of which Rs. 95,00,000 was paid into the treasury and Rs. 1,20,00,000, allotted to *Jagirdars*."<sup>1</sup> About this time the Maratha confederacy had been wound up and the several States were operating as isolated units. Malcolm who was in charge of Central India Agency has put down the revenue of Sinde, Holkar and Pavars at Rs. 1,27,68,459, Rs. 17,96,183 and Rs. 3,76,000, respectively. This estimate excludes the revenues of two other great Maratha feudatories, the Gaikvads of Baroda and Bhosles of Nagpur.

Lord Valentia, who passed through India in the early 19th century, estimated the revenues of the *Pesva's* State at Rs. 71,64,724. Mr. J. Grant of the East India Company estimated the total revenue of the Maratha empire at six crores of rupees towards the close of the 18th century.

The historian of the Marathas, Grant Duff, has a significant passage on this topic. "The nominal revenue of the whole Maratha empire at the period of Mahdoo Rav's (Madhav Rav's) death (1772), was ten crores or one hundred millions of rupees ; but the amount actually realized including the *Jagheers* (*Jagirs*) of Holkar, Sindhia (Sinde), Janoji Bhosle and Damaji Gaekvar (Gaikvad), together with tributes, fees, fines, contributions, customary offerings and all those sources independent of regular collections, which in the State accounts, come under the head of extra revenue, may be estimated at about seventy-two millions of rupees or about seven millions of pounds sterling annually. Of this sum, the revenue under the direct control of the *Pesva* was about twenty-eight millions of rupees".

The major part of this revenue was spent on military operations garrisoning forts, equipping armies and maintaining the court and the feudatories. On account of their constant wars, the *Pesvas*

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<sup>1</sup> Elphinstone to Lord Hastings, G. G., 18th June 1818, P. R. C. Vol.XIII, pp. 396-97.

could never rid themselves of debt *Baji Rav I* writing to his *guru* says (in one of his letters) that “mounting debts were his constant worry.” The Diaries of the *Pesvas* show that the debts contracted by *Balaji Baji Rav Pesva* between 1740 and 1760 amounted to a crore and a half rupees. This *Pesva* always talked of bringing rivers of gold from north and south and effecting their confluence at Poona. The defeat at Panipat disorganized Maratha finances and *Pesva* Madhav Rav died with a debt of Rs. 24,00,000 hanging over his head. The last *Pesva* had apparently no debts to pay, and was able to collect a large private treasure of his own.

Nation building activities such as education, improvement of agriculture and industry, road-making, building of canals and culverts, public sanitation were conspicuous by their absence. Public roads were dirt-tracks which turned into quagmire and rivers became impassable during the rains. Where ferries were set up by enterprising persons, government swooped down to demand fees. According to *Gordon*, the first metalled road in Maharashtra was constructed in 1835. In consequence of poor communications passenger traffic was limited to the horse and palanquin, and goods traffic to the bullock. In difficult terrain the bullock was displaced by the human being. This limited exchange of goods and emphasised isolation.

The expenditure on the military in the ultimate analysis reached a part of the people; but this class—the soldiery—made little contribution to the national income. Some of the rulers distributed charities to Brahmins and holymen, but these eleemosynary grants whatever merit they might have conferred on the donors, helped neither the cause of learning nor led to increased production. ‘

## RELIGION.<sup>1</sup>

Religion played an important part in the life of the mediaeval people and the people of Maharashtra were no exception to the rule. By sixth century India—north and south—had been culturally knit together and had come to share the same religious beliefs and ideas. The new Hinduism which had risen by absorbing the best in Buddhism turned its back on abstract nature worship and the accompanying sacrificial rites, and accepted the metaphysics of the Upanisads. The philosophical speculations, however, were reserved for the learned and the erudite. A simple form of worship, worship of idols, emblems of deities and relics of saints, found favour with the masses. The *Smritis* gave their blessings to this new form of worship and a great mythology in the form of *Puranas* was created to sustain it and to explain the universal order.

<sup>1</sup> Religious practices of the people is the subject-matter of much of Maratha poetry, right from Dnyanesvar to Ram Josi. Early British historians like Mill, Elphinstone, Duff devote a few pages to describe this aspect of the peoples’ life. The Gazetteers (old edition) give detailed description of the religious life of the community.

The basis of this religious fabric was that the great Divine Being pervaded the Universe, that the soul of every human being was part of that great spirit and it was his duty to seek perfection and reunion with *Brahman* by undergoing a process of purification. The highest bliss—*Moksa* was the ultimate reward of the good, while the wicked were punished by being reborn in forms distant from the reunion. The soul which animated the body of the Brahmin was nearest to this state of bliss, provided he fulfilled the ordinances of the faith; but if he did not, his soul would be detained in purgatory after death until sufficient torture had been inflicted to expiate the sins and then sent back to reanimate some other form on earth. Deliverance from countless births a man could obtain by being born Brahmin and by winning merit to merge with the Ultimate. Sadhus and Sanyasis, by their extreme piety and renunciation, could however attain *Moksa* direct and escape being born over and over again. This encouraged a large number of people to turn to the orders of recluse and take to the yellow robe.

The Divine Being, however, was not the active agent who called the universe into existence and made it move. This was the work of *Prakrti*. The Divine Nature urged by *Prakrti* took the form of Brahma, the Creator, Visnu, the Preserver, and Siva, the Destroyer. Brahma, Visnu and Mahes, with their consorts, became incarnate, assumed a number of forms on the earth to fulfil their missions. These incarnations are the *Avatars*. Besides the *Avatars*, the Triad' produced a host of deities which amounted to thirty-threecrores. Of these, only a few like Indra, the God of heavens, Varuna, the ruler of waters, Vayu, the lord of winds, Yama, the lord of Death, Kubera, the God of wealth and Kama, the God of love, were remembered ; and fewer still like Ganapati, Kartikeya, Surya became the objects of veneration. Most of the temples in Maharashtra were dedicated to Siva, Visnu, Ganapati and *Devi Bhavani*. They occupied prominent places in towns, were raised on lonely peaks, by lakes and river-sides and studded the country-side.\*

The ten *Avatars* of Visnu are famous and include with the Fish the Tortoise, the great Boar, the Buddha who had revolted against Hinduism. Visnu appeared in these forms to destroy tyrants and to preserve his world order. His exploits as Saviour are the subject-matter of the two great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and of the *Puranas* which came to be rendered in Marathi in the 16th and 17th centuries by *Eknath*, *Mahipati*, *Sridhar* and other Marathi poets and saints and were recited at *Kathas* and other religious gatherings which were very popular in old days. Visnu

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\* The following are the chief places of pilgrimage in Maharashtra: Aundha Naganath, Ghateshwar of Ellora, Vajranath of Parali, Bhima Sankar and Tryambakeswar, all dedicated to Siva ; Vithoba of Pandharpur and Kala Ram of Nasik dedicated to Visnu; Ganapati temples are at Morgaon, Theur, Ranjanganv, Lenyadri, Ozar, Siddhatek, Madh and Murud. Famous Devi temples are at Kolhapur, Tuljapur, Jogaica Amba, Mahur, Saptasrangi, Kurkumbh, and Aundha. Famous Khandoba shrines are at Jejuri, Pali and Pemur.

was worshipped as Narayana with his spouse Lakshmi or Rama with Sita by his side, Rama's name was sacred and would be on the lips of a dying man. Ganapati was a god of happy omens and the remover of difficulties and would be invoked on all auspicious occasions. Siva's cult was a popular one. Siva was worshipped in the form of the phallus, obviously a relief of the prehistoric past and a compromise of Brahmanism with pre-Aryan cults.

Siva's consort Bhavani was as much an object of adoration as Siva himself. She is always represented in her beneficent form shown as a beautiful woman riding a tiger in a menacing attitude to destroy the demons of sin and darkness. With Khandoba, Bhavani occupies the position of the tutelary deity of the Marathas. Sivaji the founder of the Maratha state derived inspiration from the Goddess Bhavani<sup>1</sup>. He had a shrine built in her honour at Pratapgad. Another famous temple dedicated to the Goddess stands at *Tuljapur*. Marathi ballads always begin with invocation to Bhavani.

*Khandoba*: Khandoba, literally "Sword Father" guarded the country. He was the "Isvar Dev" or Guardian Deity of the Deccan. As a guardian he is shown at his chief shrine at Jejuri, as a king, the great protector, and more often as horseman with a sword in his right hand, and his wife, Mhalsabai, sitting beside him. He was the chief household god of all Hindus in the Deccan from Brahmins to *Mahars*. His house image was always of metal, never of wood or of stone. He drove away the evil which caused sickness.

*Maruti*: Maruti, also called Hanuman, is the Monkey God. Very few villages in the Deccan were without their Maruti a rudely embossed monkey—figure, sometimes within the village and sometimes without but generally near the gate. He was supposed to be the guardian of the village and its crops. He was a special favourite of the celibate and the sportsman.

Equally important with the public or communal worship was the worship of the family deities. Every household would have a corner assigned to worship and here would be a small collection of the *Aradhya Daivata*, the *Kulsvami* or the tutelary deity, which in many cases would be Devi Bhavani or Khandoba. There would be small brass idols representing Balkrishna, Parvati and Ganapati, *saligram* representing Siva, and a few *taks* which represented the family ancestors. A Maratha after ablution in the morning would spend some time in the *Puja* before starting the work of the day. The higher castes spent more time and money over the daily rituals. Special days and occasions were marked for the public worship of particular deities by offering them incense, flowers and fruits and other gifts through Brahmin priests. The *Ekadasi* of *Asadha* and *Kartika* became occasions for pilgrimage to Pandharpur; *Maha Siva Ratri* was dedicated to Siva and there were special days for public worship of Rama, Ganapati and Dattatraya.

<sup>1</sup> Sabhasad, Life of Siva Chatrapati, pp. 11, 23, 32, 37, 49.



The family priest or Upadhyaya advised the family about religious and social observances. But its keeper of conscience was a saintly person of repute. In Hindu religion *Sadhus* and *sanyasis* have always been held in respect on account of their selfless life and renunciation of worldly affairs. Some of these *sanyasis* would get such celebrity that people would flock round them for advice and instruction. Such a person was styled a *Guru* or a *Mahapurush*, *Sivaji*, the founder of the Maratha State, respected *Ramadas* and on one occasion made a gift of his kingdom to his *Guru*; he likewise respected *Mauni Bava* of *Patgari* and found time to visit him amidst his busy rounds of duties. *Brahmendra Svami* was the spiritual guide of the *Pesva* family and much respected at *Sahu Raja's* court. Maratha chiefs sought his intercession in their affairs. Mahadji Sinde used to seek advice of a Muslim *Pir Sah Mansur* and was accustomed to prostrate himself at his feet daily.

Despite the general prevalence of Hindu beliefs the worship of *pre-Aryan* tribal gods continued to thrive. The general mass of the people were ridden by superstition and Brahmin priests did little to discourage queer ceremonies and strange rites. In villages, temples to Bhairoba and Jotiba were common. Bhairav was kept happy by application of oil and sendur and cured snake-bites. He also forecasted the success or failure of undertakings. Mhasoba, Vetal, Vaghoba, Satvai, Tukai were other godlings the villagers feared and worshipped. These aboriginal godlings had been transformed into manifestations of Siva and his consort, and were supposed to look after the health and welfare of the villagers. The nearby fields and orchards, and hills had their spirits to be appeased with buffaloes, goats and fowls, depending on their degree of malevolence. There was not a river ford or tank which was not haunted by spirits and ghosts. Even the gates and walls of forts were not free from their influence.<sup>1</sup>

The *Bhakti movement* of the middle ages was a protest against the ritual of Brahmanism and the superstition of the masses. The supremacy of one god was the first creed with everyone of the saints. The various forms in which god was worshipped were believed to merge finally into one supreme providence. The grovelling concepts prevalent among the people, the aboriginal and village gods, their frightful rites and sacrifices were denounced in forceful language. In the annual concourses at *Pandharpur* and *Jejuri* men forget their caste distinctions and hailed each other as brothers united in a common endeavour. The movement had a general liberalizing influence on society and created a healthy democratic atmosphere, rare elsewhere in India.

#### STATE OF LEARNING.<sup>2</sup>

The Marathas, generally speaking, were an unlettered people. The priestly class studied a few religious tracts and memorised ritual

<sup>1</sup> Mss. Accounts of forts Rayagad, Sinhgad, Purandar, etc., in the *Pesva Daftar*.

<sup>2</sup> Based on *Selection of Papers from the Records at the India House*, vol, IV, evidence of Elphinstone, Thackeray, Briggs, Chaplin.

which enabled it to conduct religious worship at temples and at private houses and ceremonies on occasions of birth initiation, marriage, death, etc. The Puraniks read to the gatherings the stories from Puranas and mixed their recitation with philosophical dissertations about the nature of God, of the universe and of human destiny in the scheme. The rest of the Brahmins and Kayastha Prabhus were literate, But their learning did not go beyond the knowledge of reading, writing and a little arithmetic. Good handwriting and knowledge of accounts were looked on as great assets and found for the possessor a place in the establishment of a big *inamdar*, *jagirdar* or *Mamlatdar* of the district. If he had a patron at the court he would go to the capital and be absorbed in the central secretariat, the Dafter. The *Pesva* and the chiefs as a mark of their interest in learning would collect manuscript copies of religious tracts and the Puranas and would distribute charity to learned Brahmins once a year in the month of *Sravan*. The Sastri well-versed in Vedas got the highest reward of a sawl and a few hundred rupees, others got them in a descending scale. In the days of Nana Phadnis the Poona Government was annually spending Rs. 60,000 on the *Sravan Daksina*. The expenditure increased in the time of his successor, not because there was more learning, but the charity became indiscriminate.

This encouragement to Sanskrit learning made little impact on the life or the people, resulted in no mechanical improvements and brought no tangible gains to society. No attempt was made to know the phenomena of the physical world and stock the mind with useful knowledge. If the object of education is to set the mind free to inquire and to rationalise, the primitive type of education that was in vogue in the eighteenth century Maharashtra, could not achieve it. No great universities comparing with Oxford or Cambridge rose and no great development in philosophy, literature or political thought, took place. The result was a thickening gloom of superstition and an irrational fear of the unknown.

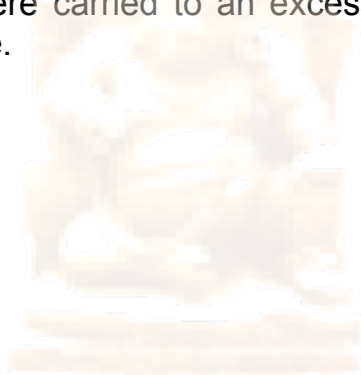
*Rajwade* has put the matter in a forceful manner in his Introduction to Volume I. He says “The fact of the matter was Maratha culture had become stagnant and showed itself impervious to new knowledge and new ideas. Learning of those days ran into three types—Vaidik, Sastrik and practical. The practical type of educated men found useful in administration and business of everyday life. The Vaidiks and Sastris received royal patronage while school teachers looked to popular support. Practical learning consisted of the knowledge of Three “R”s—reading writing and arithmetic. *Bakhars* of Maratha and “Muslim kings, tales of Vikram, Vetāl, chronicles based on stories in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata or on the legendary accounts of Hindu and Muslim kings, knowledge of account-keeping, land measurements, of correct forms of address and a little religious poetry completed the stock-in-trade of a literary person of the day. Most of the Brahmins, traders and upper class Marathas acquired this type of learning. These three

classes had little knowledge of the world outside their personal experience. The geographical knowledge of even diplomats and soldiers did not extend beyond what they acquired by their personal exertion. These people were little aware of countries and people outside India. The rulers on account of their contacts with foreigners naturally came to know more. Compared to the wide extent of information of Western rulers, their knowledge was contemptible. There was none at the *Pesva's* Court who showed awareness of the existence of European Sciences, none knew of schools, colleges, conferences, museums, associations in which study of critical sciences was encouraged."

### **Superstitions.**

Belief in omens and prognostics was common to all classes. Not only thunder, lightening hail-storm and earth quakes filled men's mind with alarm but the hooting of an owl, chirping of a bird at an unusual hour or even twitching of the eye, frightened them and made them run to the priest to seek appeasement of the evil. Even forts and jagirs were supposed to suffer from the presence of evil spirits which could be exorcised with the help of priestly mediation.

In 1763 when Raghoba was besieging the fort of *Miraj*, Govind Hari Patvardhan was assured in his dream by the *Pir* of the place of ultimate victory. *Raghoba* often fasted and denied himself food so that his nephew whom he hated should come to harm, In 1774-75, ghosts played such havoc In Southern, Konkan that special officers were appointed to punish persons who had raised the spirits. The dead wife of Amrt Rav, son of Raghoba, took to walking at night and frightening people. These irrational fears were carried to an excess and continued to fominate the minds of men in Maharastra for a long time.

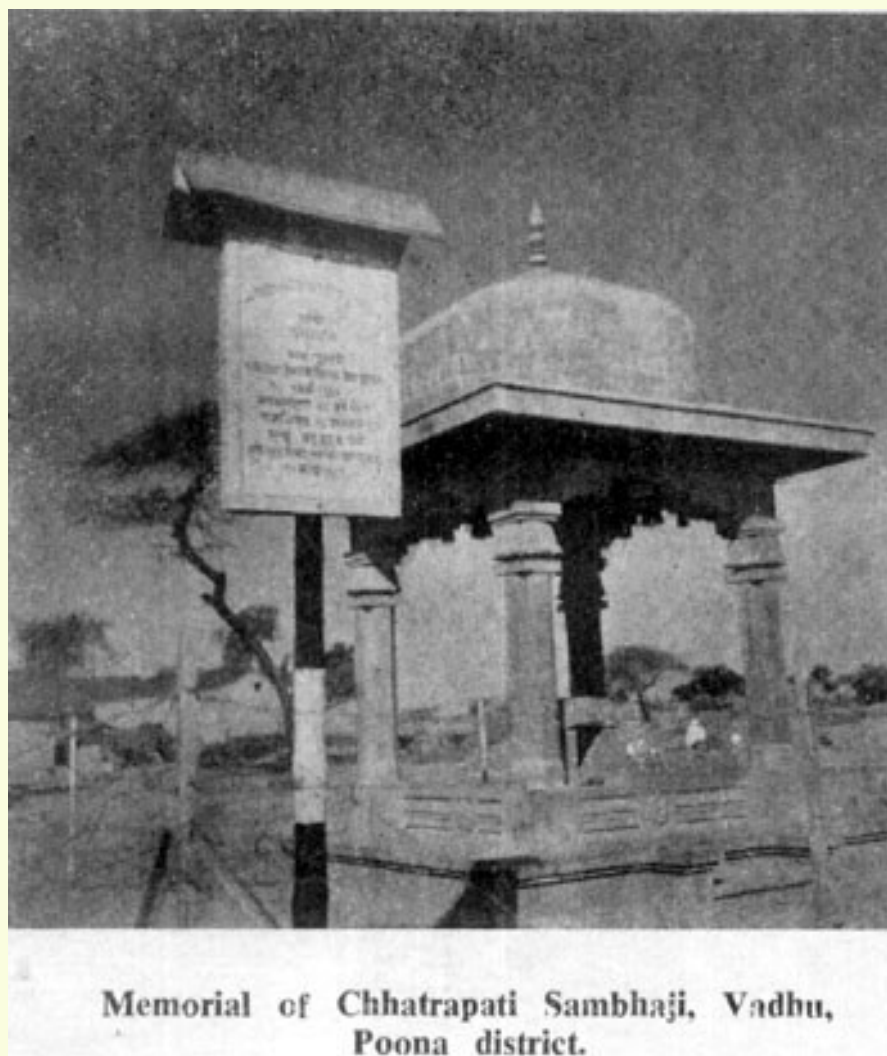




Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj



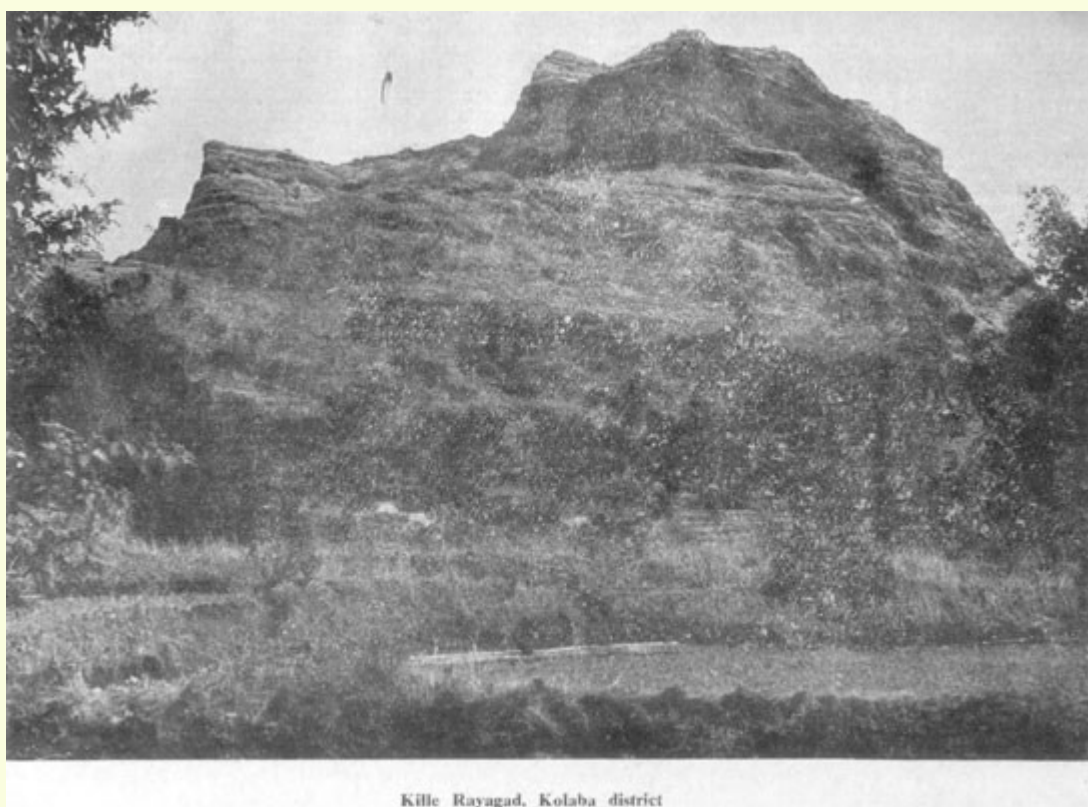
Memorial of Sambhaji, Vadhu, Poona district



Nanasaheb Peshwe



Kille Raigad, Kolaba district



### Panoramic view of Pratapgad, Satara District



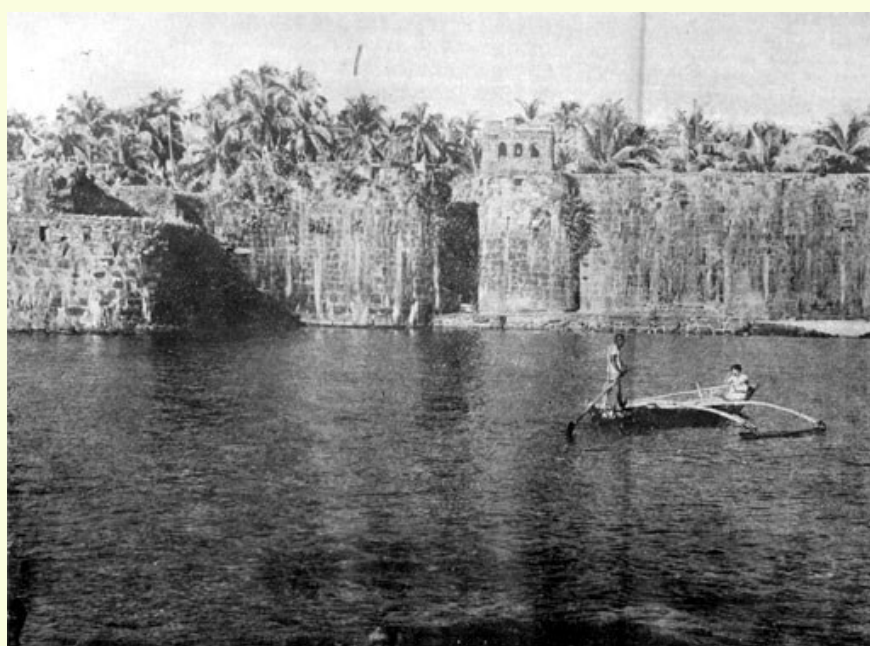
Panoramic view of the Pratapgad, Satara district

### An Observation post at Pratapgad



An observation post at Pratapgad

### Kille Sindhurg, Malwan, Sindhurg district



Kille Sindhurg, Malwan, Ratnagiri district



## Shaniwar Wada, Poona



Shaniwar Wada, Poona